

New
File
Tanner

MEMORANDUM FOR MAGGIE WILLIAMS

FROM: KAREN
RE: HENRY TANNER PAINTING
DATE: 2/5/96

Attached to this memo is the updated version of the WH Endowment Fund press release for your review. In addition to the list that the Endowment Fund would like to send it to, we ought to send it to the historical black colleges, the Smithsonian Museum, Department of African Art, and to Art departments around the country. We can also include Peggy's African American press list.

I had a meeting with Ben Johnson and Peggy Lewis yesterday to discuss ideas for the arrival of the Henry Tanner painting in April. I'd like to propose the following:

- o HRC should do a photo op with the painting as it will hang in the house possible with (or without) Tanner's relatives. We could do a mailing with that photo and HRC remarks (see point #2) to the African-American press list, the arts list, African-American groups, the Historic Black Colleges, and Art Departments.
- o HRC should host a reception here at the WH, which we should do as a two-part event similar to the Sculpture Garden Receptions:
 1. An open-press speaking program with HRC, Dr. Rae Alexander Minter, Tanner's grandniece, and one or two others deemed appropriate.
 2. A reception for the guests following the speaking program with or without a Blue Room receiving line. The invited guests could include Tanner's living relatives, Jane Alexander, prominent living African-American artists, up and coming young black artists, specific arts press i.e. Arthur Spiegel from the WSJ, a few good Dems who are "friends of the arts" like Cicely Tyson, art students and the director of the art department at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts where Tanner attended.

WHITE HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND ACQUIRES HENRY OSSAWA TANNER PAINTING

The White House Endowment Fund has acquired Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City, a painting by the noted African-American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner. This is the first painting by an African-American artist to be a part of the White House permanent collection.

Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City (c. 1885, oil on canvas, 29-1/4 x 58-3/4 inches) is a landscape with a "view across the cool gray of a shadowed beach to dunes made pink by the late afternoon sunlight. A low haze over the water partially hides the sun." The painting is considered one of Henry Tanner's largest, most artistically ambitious and most beautiful pure landscapes.

Tanner (1859-1937), the son of an African Methodist Episcopal minister and a mother who conducted private school in her home, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He studied under Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and was greatly influenced by Thomas Hovenden and by Hovenden's genre paintings of the 1880's. Although he spent over half of his life in France where he found an expansive and more accepting environment, he always considered himself an American. He made periodic visits to the United States and served as a lieutenant with the American Red Cross during World War I.

Mrs. Clinton was concerned that the White House collection did not include a painting by an African-American artist. She

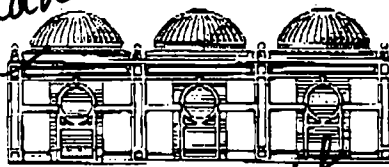
initiated a search which resulted in the recommendation of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House to purchase Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City. The painting was obtained from Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter, grandniece of the artist by the White House Endowment Fund for \$100,000. The White House Endowment Fund is a non-profit charity and wholly-owned subsidiary of the White House Historical Association. The purpose of the Fund is to raise a \$25 million endowment to provide permanent support for the White House collection of fine arts and furnishings and to preserve the historic character of the public rooms of the White House.

Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City, is presently on exhibition at the Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago and will be delivered to the White House at the conclusion of the exhibition on April 28.

For additional information, please contact the White House Curator's Office at (202) 456-2550.

#

*Peggy - Do we have
a Tanner
file.*



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART • SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

this should be in it

Maggie

MEMORANDUM

TO: Rex Scouten
The White House
Fax: 456-6255

DATE: February 26, 1996

FROM: Holly Laffoon *Holly*
Staff Assistant to the Director
Tel: 202-357-4600 x 205
Fax: 202-357-4629

SUBJECT: Sylvia Williams

We received the material you sent to Sylvia today. I thought I should let you know that Sylvia had surgery last Wednesday (the 21st) for an aneurysm on her brain. All we can report at this time is that she is stable and is doing as well as can be expected.

Cards and notes can be sent to:

Mrs. Sylvia H. Williams
Georgetown University Medical Center
Room C-63
3800 Reservoir Road, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

So long as she is in intensive care, she cannot receive flowers.

I will hold the materials for her return. We have no idea when this might be; I think she may be out for some months.

*Maggie - Sylvia was President of the
association of art museum directors
at the beginning of the Sculpture Exhibition -
She was the key person in the location
of the Henry Tanner painting and she
has been so very helpful to the White House*

950 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, S.W. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560 • 202/357-4600

in other situations

*I think she should have a note of
encouragement from Mrs. Clinton*

*Thank you
Rex Scouten*

October 28, 1996

REMARKS DURING THE PRESENTATION OF THE
HENRY OSSAWA TANNER PAINTING
TO THE PERMANENT WHITE HOUSE COLLECTION

DATE: October 29, 1996
LOCATION: The East Room
TIME: 6:30PM
FROM: Maggie Williams
Peggy Lewis

I. PURPOSE

To give remarks at the presentation of Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City (c.1885, oil on canvas), a painting by the renowned African-American Artist Henry Ossawa (OSS-a-wah) Tanner. This is the first painting by an African-American artist to be part of the White House permanent collection.

II. BACKGROUND

In March 1994, Eddie Bell, a teacher at a Junior College in Paltz, New York took a tour of the White House and wrote to you asking why there wasn't a painting by an African-American artist in the White House. You asked the White House Curator Rex Scouten to focus his attention on adding to the collection. Rex working with the late Sylvia Williams, Director of the Smithsonian's Museum of African Art and Professor David Driskell, an expert on African-American art began the search. After nearly 9 months they presented their selection to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, of which Mrs. Clinton is the Honorary Chair. The selection was unanimously approved by the committee. Shortly after the White House Endowment fund approved the funding and purchased the painting from Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter (grandniece of the artist) for \$100,000.

Henry Ossawa (OSS-a-wah) Tanner was born June 21, 1859. His father was a college-educated teacher and minister who later became a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. His mother Sarah Tanner was born a slave and sent north to Pittsburgh through the Underground Railroad. Henry's middle name, Ossawa, was derived from Osawatomie, the town in Kansas where abolitionist John Brown launched his antislavery campaign. For 18 months, Henry Tanner's father was the pastor of the Fifteenth Street Colored Presbyterian Church here in Washington at the time of the election of President Abraham Lincoln.

Tanner decided he wanted to be an artist at the age of thirteen. When he was twenty-one, he enrolled in the

prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. There he studied with a group of master professors including Thomas Eakins. After teaching at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia and trying to sell his paintings there and Highlands, North Carolina, he received an endowment from Bishop and Mrs. Joseph Crane Hartzell, and went to Paris and enrolled in the Academie Julian and studied and painted. In Paris he painted two of his most important works depicting African American subjects, The Banjo Lesson (see attached) and The Thankful Poor. He married Jessie Olssen, a white opera singer from San Francisco, whom he met in Paris. They had one son, Jesse Ossawa, born in New York in 1903. Tanner returned to France and in 1923 was made an honorary chevalier of the Order of the Legion of Honor, France's highest honor.

Unfortunately during his lifetime, Tanner was more celebrated overseas than in his homeland. He wrote once from Paris about the prejudice that drove him from the U.S. to a life in exile in Paris:

"True this condition has driven me out of the country...and while I cannot sing our National Hymn, "Land of Liberty," etc., still deep down in my heart I love it and am sometimes sad that I cannot live where my heart is."

What a wonderful homecoming to have his art now hang in the nation's house.

III. PARTICIPANTS

To be provided by the Social Office

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

To be provided by the Social Office

VI. REMARKS

Speechwriting

HENRY OSSAWA (OSS-a-wah) TANNER Q & A's

Why has it taken so long for the White House to acquire a painting by an African American artist?

Acquisitions to the permanent collection are purchased through private donations. This is not federally funded. Money has to be raised. We got what we could get when we could get it. Paintings are very expensive, and African American art pieces are not readily available...with many of them in private collections or in galleries and museums not willing to part with them.

Why now?

Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City was the centerpiece of a traveling show on Tanner's work. We did not want to disrupt the show by removing what was considered the most important piece in the collection. When we did receive it some restoration work had to be done on the frame and then it was difficult to find a time on both the President and First Lady's schedules to host a proper presentation of the painting to the American public.

Isn't this a political move to attract African American voters?

No, this is an historic occasion to be celebrated by all Americans. The White House is the first house of the nation, and should reflect the diversity that makes us great. We have been looking for the appropriate painting for two years, once we learned that there was not an African American artist represented in the permanent collection. And we didn't know that right away because so much of the collection is in storage. Once we realized the need, a search began.

Why Tanner?

Henry Tanner was selected because he is considered to be the most distinguished African-American artist of this century, and was the first African American artist to achieve international acclaim.

Why a landscape instead of a portrait that shows African Americans?

It is very difficult to acquire Tanner paintings. They are in galleries or owned by private collectors unwilling to part with them. Many of the well known pieces portraying African Americans, such as The Banjo Lesson or The Thankful Poor are unavailable. Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City is considered one of Henry Tanner's largest, most artistically ambitious and most beautiful pure landscapes.

How much was the painting?

The painting was obtained from Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter, grandniece of the artist, by the White House Endowment Fund for \$100,000.

What was the process?

Edward Bell, a citizen who toured the White House, corresponded with the President about the omission of an African American artist in the White House. The President directed Mrs. Clinton who is Honorary Chair of the Committee of the Preservation of the White House and the White House Curator, Rex Scouten to focus their attention on adding to the collection. Scouten, assisted by the late Sylvia Williams, Director of the Museum of African Art for the Smithsonian, and Professor David Driskell, a renowned expert on African-American art, began the search for the right piece to add to the White House permanent collection.

After nearly 9 months, the search committee presented its selection to the committee for the Preservation of the White House, of which Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton is the Honorary Chair. The selection was unanimously approved by the committee. Shortly after, the White House Endowment fund approved the funding and purchased the painting for \$100,000. Although purchased in early Spring of this year, the White House didn't receive the painting right away because it was the centerpiece of a traveling exhibit.







HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
AND CATALOGUE CHAPTERS BY
DEWEY F. MOSBY

CATALOGUE ENTRIES BY
DEWEY F. MOSBY AND DARREL SEWELL

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY BY
RAE ALEXANDER-MINTER

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK



Henry Ossawa Tanner, c. 1935.

REFLECTIONS ON RACE, PUBLIC RECEPTION, AND CRITICAL RESPONSE IN TANNER'S CAREER

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937) emerged as one of the best known and most highly esteemed artists of his time in both the United States and France. One contemporary critic stated in 1911: “He makes his home continuously in Paris, where many claim that he is the greatest artist that America has produced.”¹ Tanner was the first black artist to acquire an international reputation in this century,² and he remains well known today in museum and academic circles, although his name is not familiar to a more general audience. It is the aim of this exhibition and catalogue to present his life’s work in a fuller context; this essay seeks to give a historical overview of certain paradoxes that arise in any assessment of Tanner. For example, as an artist he has been discussed concurrently by French critics as a history painter and by their American counterparts as a religious painter, while other writers disregarded his subjects altogether in order to concentrate on his style or technique.³ These diverse responses have their roots in the evolution of his work; Tanner pursued traditional modes with an often striking individualism.

Primary among the questions to be addressed at the outset is Tanner’s race and his attitude toward it in relation to his career, because this issue is at the core of much of what has been said about him. His parents gave him the middle name Ossawa in tribute to the abolitionist John Brown of Osawatomie, and Tanner was fortified with a solid grounding in racial issues from his father, Benjamin Tucker Tanner, who tackled the subject as early as 1869 in the small book with the startling title *The Negro’s Origins and Is the Negro Cursed*. The Reverend Tanner wrote: “No people now exists who can trace more clearly their paternity than the Negro. The genealogical table of the Negro, written in his own flesh, remains. Ages of scouring have not sufficed to erase it. Written by the finger of God, it is more enduring than the stones of Sinai. It remains, and will remain the badge of our suffering, the triumph.”⁴ Benjamin Tanner’s lifelong and forthright pursuit of social justice and his defiance of prejudice must have been powerfully stimulating for his children.

An excellent introduction to the link between Tanner’s development as an artist and his race, and the plight of many creative black people in general, is articulated by a biographer of the talented poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906): “The black writer must not merely live in two worlds; he inevitably writes for two worlds. Whatever he writes is affected by what Ralph Ellison has called ‘the complex

relationship between the Negro-American subculture and North American culture as a whole.'"⁵ Tanner can be said to have painted for three worlds—for Paris, for America, and for African-Americans—and surely he was conscious of the responses of each.

Tanner was celebrated as an artist by African-American intellectuals from the outset of his career. After only a short period as a professional painter, he was included, together with artist Edward Mitchell Bannister (1828–1901), in William J. Simmons's biographical study of black leaders entitled *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising*, published in 1887.⁶ By 1898 Tanner's name was linked with Dunbar's and with the great educator Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) in a letter to Washington from an admirer: "God has undoubtedly exalted you to be our Moses. We read about you in the greatest papers and magazines published in our great country—Washington, Tanner, and Dunbar. We stand before them with uncovered heads. We follow them without questioning their right to lead."⁷

Washington himself knew the Tanner family and was deeply impressed by Henry's achievement as an artist. In *Up from Slavery* he wrote about seeing Tanner's work on view at the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris: "Few people ever stopped, I found, when looking at his pictures, to inquire whether Mr. Tanner was a Negro painter, a French painter, a German painter. They simply knew that he was able to produce something which the world wanted—a great painting—and the matter of his color did not enter into their minds."⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), the distinguished black scholar who demanded full and immediate equality for African-Americans, in contrast to Washington's emphasis on first achieving economic parity, also knew Tanner and cited him in a 1901 article in the *Dial* as one of a vital group of black leaders who "seek . . . that self development and self realization in all lines of human endeavor which they believe will eventually place the Negro beside the other races."⁹

In 1908, an essay by an anonymous American writer drew together a number of themes, exemplifying the complex problem of discussing Tanner as both an American artist and a black artist:

For several years part of the art world of Paris has shown a steadily increasing interest in the work of Henry O. Tanner, a young American painter who has done much towards strengthening that higher position in contemporary art which was won for us by [John Singer] Sargent and [James A. M.] Whistler. In America, public recognition of Tanner's greatness has been somewhat retarded by the fact that he is a Negro and our publications have persistently spoken of him as the greatest Negro painter. It has pleased them to slight his art in the exploration of his race.¹⁰

The writer's own rather confused, if well-meaning tone—characteristic of its date—is illustrated by a further passage:

Booker T. Washington wrote of him: "Tanner is proud of his race. He feels deeply that as the representative of his people he is on trial to establish their right to be taken seriously in the world of art." But this classification of Tanner's work, while literally true, gives an erroneous impression. Although his paintings exhibit that full-blooded sense of rhythm and color which give a peculiar charm to the art productions of his race, Tanner's work is above all racial distinctions. He should no longer be classified as

the foremost negro painter, but rather as one of the greatest artists whom America has produced.¹¹

The notion of a "full-blooded sense of rhythm," in spite of the good intentions of this writer, can be interpreted as subtle racism.¹² Throughout his career, Tanner's art continued to be associated with his race, by black and white writers alike. The headline for a 1924 article in the *New York Times*, to cite one of many instances, read: "Tanner Exhibits Paintings: Negro Artist Shows Pictures at Grand Central Art Galleries."¹³

The complicated nature of Tanner's own thinking about race is partly conveyed in a long letter discovered by his biographer, Marcia M. Mathews. On May 25, 1914, Tanner wrote to a woman who planned to publish a long article on his work in *International Studio*:

Your good note and very appreciative article to hand. I have read it and, except [being] more than I deserve, it is exceptionally good. What you say is what I am trying to do and in a smaller way am doing [I hope]. The only thing I take exception to is the inference in your last paragraph – and while I know it is the dictum in the States, it is not any more true for that reason. You say "In his personal life, Mr. T. has had many things to contend with. Ill-health, poverty, and race prejudice, always strong against a Negro." Now am I a Negro. Does not the 3/4 of English blood in my veins, which when it flowed in "pure" Anglo-Saxon men and which has done in the past effective and distinguished work in the U.S. – does this not count for anything? Does the 1/4 or 1/8 of "pure" Negro blood in my veins count for all? I believe it, the Negro blood counts and counts to my advantage – though it has caused me at times a life of great humiliation and sorrow but that it is the source of all my talents (if I have any) I do not believe, any more than I believe it all comes from my English ancestors. I suppose according to the distorted way things are seen in the States my blond curly-headed little boy would be "Negro." – True, this condition has driven me out of the country, but still my best friends I have are "white" Americans and while I cannot sing our National Hymn, "Land of Liberty," etc., still deep down in my heart I love it and am sometimes sad that I cannot live where my heart is.¹⁴

This letter was written when Tanner was deeply absorbed in painting scenes of North Africa and its people, whom his father had characterized as descended from Ham, the biblical progenitor of the black race, and we can take Tanner's emphatic statement, "I believe it, the Negro blood counts and counts to my advantage," as clear confirmation of his pride in his own roots.

Even during difficult later years Tanner continued to contribute to the NAACP, which valued the support sent from Paris. The famous author James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), then secretary of the Legal Defense Fund, wrote to Tanner on New Year's Eve, 1925: "It was especially gratifying to us to receive your contribution of twenty-five dollars to the Legal Defense Fund which we are establishing. I think that the published report of your contribution stimulated others to give."¹⁵

During the last decade of his life, when he was more than seventy years old, Tanner began to be characterized as aloof from other African-American artists living in Paris. This idea was expressed, probably for the first time, by the black printmaker Albert Smith (1896–1940), who wrote about Tanner in 1936 to the distinguished bibliophile Arthur Schomburg (1874–1938): "Personally I remember seeing him but

once since I have been in France. I understand through the chatty American secretary of the organization that he has a farm somewhere down the line and that with the communion that the earth gives you he finds the solitude that gives birth to his paintings. I must say that the American White artists hold him in deep respect."¹⁶

This personal view of Tanner seems to have evolved into such notions as those expressed by Cedric Dover in 1960 in *American Negro Art*:

American appreciation kept the "dean of American painters" comfortably aloof in Paris for forty-six years. He liked the role of an expatriate phenomenon in search of artistic truth; and coloured artists who sought his help were accordingly reminded that they could have it as artists, not as Negroes. So, above nationality and group loyalty, he spent the last twenty years of his life in increasing isolation and decline.¹⁷

The above contention is rendered off the mark by Tanner's unpublished letters among the Alexander papers at the University of Pennsylvania Archives, which show that the sense of racial identity and pride he had demonstrated over previous decades continued during his final years. He wrote to his niece, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, on March 23, 1936:

Yes, I met Marian Anderson not in Paris, but if I am not mistaken, in the person in your house. . . . However whether I have met her or not I am very glad she has a so beautiful voice and it is being recognized. However, "we are coming." Have you met Zora N. Hurston who has written a book that "they say" is fine – *Mules and Men* – I suppose you know of it – I am only judging by what I see in print and I very hope it is so.¹⁸

The artist himself provided an eloquent summation of the issue of race and his artistic career shortly before his death, when he wrote to his niece about an African-American he had encountered: "[He] has very probably never heard of me, as have not many hundreds and thousands of our people whom you might expect would know of my work, but it was not all for myself that I have tried in the measure of my ability to make a success of my life."¹⁹

In addition to the attention his work received from distinguished African-American writers, Tanner garnered ample recognition in the international art literature of his time from critics for such periodicals as *Revue de l'Art*, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, *International Studio*, *Fine Arts Journal*, and *Brush and Pencil* as well as in the pages of general magazines of wide circulation such as *Harper's Weekly*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Cosmopolitan*. Daily newspapers including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *New York Times*, and *Boston Evening Transcript* gave Tanner his due, and his career was the focus of articles in the *Negro History Bulletin* and W. E. B. Du Bois's *Crisis*.

A brief sampling demonstrates the esteem in which Tanner was held by critics. A writer in 1899 reviewed the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual: "Mr. Tanner continues to paint biblical scenes. . . . These paintings are naive, and yet they have strong sentiment, and a deal of honest fervor which leaves no place in one's judgment of them for anything but respect. Compared with these two paintings, Mr. Henri's two appear trivial."²⁰ The following year in *Cosmopolitan*, Vance Thompson discussed Tanner in an article on American artists in Paris: "A strange personage, this young mulatto – the product of Philadelphia and the Latin Quarter and Bethlehem – who is destined I like to think, to give the world a new conception . . . of the Bible."²¹

Not all the reviews were favorable, and Tanner took his share of criticism for being (depending upon the critic) too advanced or too conservative. Arthur Hoeber decried his work shown in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual of 1901:

The exhibition contains, too, much of an experimental nature of the latest developments in the art way, the extremists increasingly finding favor with the jury. Most of these, it must be confessed, are interesting rather for describing modern tendencies than for serious accomplishments, while a number are so freakish and so mannered as to count for little . . . for example, Henry O. Tanner . . . ²²

Biographical accounts of Tanner began with Simmons's *Men of Mark*, and in 1909 the artist was invited to tell his own story in two issues of a periodical published by Doubleday, *World's Work*. By 1911, "Henry O. Tanner" appeared as an entry in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Later, brief biographies appeared in J. W. Cromwell's 1914 *The Negro in American History*²³ and Rilla Evelyn Jackman's *American Arts of 1928*.²⁴ After Tanner's death in 1937, biographical sketches continued to appear in such important studies as *The Negro in Art* by Alain L. Locke in 1940²⁵ and James A. Porter's *Modern Negro Art* of 1943.²⁶

Professor Locke's subsequent writing²⁷ on Tanner set the stage for future negative criticism of the artist.²⁸ Locke was disappointed because the artist did not use his international prestige to take the lead in the development of a specifically African-American school of art, which Locke hoped would be centered around genre scenes of people of color, in spite of the fact that Tanner's reputation was based on his treatment of biblical subjects. Milton M. James came to the artist's defense in an article of 1957 in the *Negro History Bulletin*:

Much can be said in support of Dr. Locke's point of view, however, it is the firm opinion of the writer that it is not the provenance of critics to say what a painter should paint. Painters, like other artists, must say what they have to say in their own way and through the mediums and motifs of their choice. The work of a painter must not be prescribed, for if it is, it will not be art but simply a slavish allegiance to the whims of theorists.²⁹

The first book-length scholarly study of Tanner appeared in 1960, an informative doctoral dissertation by Walter Augustus Simon.³⁰ His unpublished work places Tanner's life in the ethnographic and sociological context of his time, but discussion of Tanner's art is limited. In 1987, Naurice Frank Woods, Jr., also wrote a dissertation on the artist³¹ which considered recent literature and a cache of new letters and other documents. The standard biography of the artist, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist*, published by Marcia M. Mathews in 1969, drew upon letters and other documentation among the Tanner papers, which entered the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in 1968 and 1971; contemporary articles and reviews; and the reminiscences of the artist's son, Jesse Ossawa Tanner (1903-1985). Mathews's text remains a major source of information on Tanner's life.³²

Tanner's career was heralded both in his native America and in his adopted France, yet paradoxically, in the United States he tended to be seen as an expatriate absorbed into French culture, and in France he was always "citoyen américain." As a result, Tanner and other artists working abroad have tended to fall between the cracks in several books that deal with the art of his period. For example, Barbara Novak's 1969 seminal study, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century*,³³ did not include

the Francophile Tanner, it being beyond the author's scope to "find the native qualities and their transformation under the veneer of European modes" of Tanner and many of his colleagues.³⁴ As recent scholarship focuses on the more conservative Salon tradition of many American artists around the turn of the century, Tanner is increasingly recognized as an important figure in such books as Lois Marie Fink's *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, published in 1990.³⁵

The exhibition history of Tanner's work is closely related to his critical reception. The chronology in this volume reveals how widely his works were shown during his lifetime in cities ranging from San Francisco to St. Louis, Chicago to Philadelphia and New York, and Paris to Rome. After his death in 1937, there was a long hiatus until a memorial exhibition was held at the Philadelphia Art Alliance in 1945.³⁶ From this time until the late 1960s, euphemistically called an era of "racial unrest," Tanner and his art were largely forgotten by organizers of exhibitions. Then a flurry of shows devoted exclusively to Tanner appeared between 1967 and 1972. These projects ranged from a modest but interesting exhibition of 1969 held at Spelman College in Atlanta³⁷ to the regional show organized by the Hyde Collection of Glens Falls, New York, in 1972.³⁸ The major undertaking of this period was a nationally touring exhibition organized for 1969–70 by the Frederick Douglass Institute/Museum of African Art in collaboration with the National Collection of Fine Arts.³⁹

Following this new surge of interest, Tanner was included in a number of scholarly and often revisionist exhibitions such as *Turn of the Century America*, organized by Patricia Hills for the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1977;⁴⁰ *Themes in American Painting*, curated by J. Gray Sweeney for the Grand Rapids Art Museum in 1977;⁴¹ and *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting*, organized by Charles C. Eldridge in 1979 for New York University and the University of Kansas.⁴² The black artist was also included in ethnocentric exhibitions such as *Three Nineteenth Century Afro-American Artists*, 1980,⁴³ and *Americans in Brittany and Normandy 1860–1910* in 1982.⁴⁴ Nor was Tanner ignored in France, as is evidenced by the show held at Blérancourt in 1984, *La peinture Américaine dans les Collections du Louvre*.⁴⁵ The most recent exhibition in the "centric" vein to include Tanner, *Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth-Century America*, was organized by Lynda Roscoe Hartigan and toured the country from 1985 to 1988.⁴⁶

Yet a number of recent large survey exhibitions of nineteenth-century American art omitted Tanner. He was not seen in the major United States showing at Boston of *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910*,⁴⁷ although his *Annunciation* (cat. no. 45) was added to the exhibition at Paris. Even though Tanner was heralded in print in 1913 as "the poet-painter of Palestine,"⁴⁸ he did not fit the mold carved by the organizers of *The Orientalists*, shown at the National Gallery of Art and the Royal Academy of Art in 1984.⁴⁹ There is no clear evidence that Tanner was deliberately excluded from large exhibitions in the mid 1970s and 1980s, but some omissions are surprising. *The Quest for Unity*,⁵⁰ which surveyed the arts in America between the World's Fairs of 1876 and 1893, included neither Tanner nor Edward Mitchell Bannister. Tanner was just emerging as an artist during these years, but at the Centennial Exposition of 1876, Bannister's *Under the Oaks* won a first-place bronze medal and certificate of award, and was considered "the best that an American artist could do."⁵¹

Representation in museum collections is as important to an artist's reputation as inclusion in major exhibitions. Almost from the outset of his career, Tanner's works were sought by public institutions as well as collectors. The French government bought two paintings – *The Resurrection of Lazarus* (cat. no. 38) in 1897 and *The Disciples at Emmaus* (see fig. 71) in 1906 – for the Musée du Luxembourg, the official French repository for masterpieces of contemporary art, selected by a highly competitive acquisition process.⁵² The support of American museums from coast to coast was demonstrated by such early purchases as *The Annunciation* (cat. no. 45) by the Wilstach Collection for the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Art in 1899, *Nicodemus Visiting Jesus* (cat. no. 47) by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1900, *Christ at the Home of Mary and Martha* (cat. no. 58) by the Carnegie Institute in 1905, and *Two Disciples at the Tomb* (cat. no. 59) by the Art Institute of Chicago in 1906. Major African-American colleges and universities also collected works by Tanner during his lifetime, beginning with the Hampton Institute, which received two paintings, including *The Banjo Lesson* (cat. no. 27), as a gift from Robert C. Ogden in 1894, and concluding with Howard University, which acquired an important picture by public subscription in 1937, shortly before the artist's death.

The largest group of Tanner's work now in the public domain – fifty paintings, watercolors, drawings, and etchings – was acquired by the Frederick Douglass Institute/Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C., through the energetic efforts of the museum's founder and director, Warren N. Robbins. This collection was transferred to the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in 1983. Tanner's works are now on view in many museums, from Los Angeles to Paris, but more are ensconced in the storage racks and offices of others. The latter situation, coupled with the fact that many of the works reproduced and discussed in this catalogue have been lost to view for nearly eight decades, has impeded a thorough assessment of the artist's career.

Because of this state of affairs, Tanner is frequently recognized purely as a painter of religious themes based on the fame of such uncontested masterpieces as *The Resurrection of Lazarus* and *The Annunciation*. The recent wide distribution of a poster of *The Banjo Lesson* and the attention paid to *The Thankful Poor* (cat. no. 28), owing to its dramatic rediscovery and the celebrity of its subsequent owners, William H. and Camille O. Cosby, have created another, different image of the artist as a painter of African-American genre. Tanner's full range, including Oriental subjects based on life in North Africa and the Near East, has been more accurately indicated in recent exhibitions such as *Sharing Traditions*. Critics, art historians, and curators do well to avoid pigeonholing Tanner according to the stylistic "isms" used to describe art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will become apparent from this catalogue that, without becoming eclectic, the artist put to work several modes for his own creative goals.

Almost from the beginning, Tanner found an impressive number of private patrons and collectors who purchased his work and promoted his career. Museum collections were enriched by paintings presented as gifts by many of these benefactors. The earliest example is Robert C. Ogden's gift of the famous *Banjo Lesson* to the Hampton Institute in 1894. In 1922 the California collectors Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison pledged Tanner's late version of *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (cat. no. 87) to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Atherton Curtis, the Francophile American

print collector and author of several books on prints,⁵³ presented a version of *Sodom and Gomorrah* (see cat. no. 98) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1924. J. J. Haverty of Atlanta acquired several works from Tanner in the late 1920s, paving the way for important gifts to the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

But this widespread patronage also had a paradoxical aspect. As early as 1899, Tanner's supporters were concerned that his paintings were not reaching the black community, an audience of great importance to him. Booker T. Washington wrote in the *Washington Colored American*:

An earnest effort was made in Philadelphia and elsewhere sometime ago to get our people to contribute sufficient money to purchase *The Bagpipe Lesson*, an early work of the artist, but with little or no practical success. . . . This first work of Mr. Tanner's was finally, I believe, purchased by some Philadelphia white people. Few of the race are able individually to purchase Mr. Tanner's original paintings, but hundreds are able to secure the photographs of these productions. . . . This is the practical test in a large measure of our gratitude to and admiration for Mr. Tanner. . . . Will we help to do this or shall we leave it all to others to do?⁵⁴

Some twenty-five years after Washington's plea, W. E. B. Du Bois returned to the same subject in the *Crisis*: "Once in Paris, years ago, Henry Tanner, the great artist, voiced a complaint—a little complaint, hesitatingly and diffidently expressed. 'Do you know, I never have been able to sell one of my pictures to a colored man.'"⁵⁵ Du Bois's response to Tanner's understated but moving remark is still relevant: "I mumbled vague apologies: We are poor ('We own 100,000 automobiles,' said my soul); We have not yet come to appreciate art ('We are the only American artists,' murmured my mind); We are not yet sufficiently familiar with your work ('Tanner is a perennial essay subject,' remarked my sinking heart): In fact it was our muddling carelessness. Who of us buys even books, much less pictures?"⁵⁶

By 1924 several African-American institutions had commissioned work from Tanner, and Du Bois did have good news to report about private black patronage of his art:

But the ice is broken. At the last New York exhibit of Tanner's marvelous canvasses [held at Grand Central Art Galleries in 1923] . . . John E. Nail of New York City paid a price that ran into four figures for two paintings worth a journey of a thousand miles to see. And another young colored man, Dr. Godfrey Nurse, bought a third; and we learn that two or three Negroes are actually considering similar purchases. These are sure signs of civilization.⁵⁷

The mention of "prices paid" raises the question of what level of income the sale of pictures provided Tanner during his lifetime. In 1897 the French government paid him 1800 francs, or roughly \$346, for *The Resurrection of Lazarus* while a work of comparable size, *Paysage d'Automne* by the French artist Eugène Tanguy (1830–99), fetched 600 francs the same year.⁵⁸ Rodman Wanamaker paid \$1750 for *The Annunciation* in 1899, and the Pennsylvania Academy bought *Nicodemus Visiting Jesus* for \$1500 in 1900. Between 1901 and 1902, the *Ladies Home Journal* commissioned four paintings to illustrate a series on the mothers of the Bible (cat. nos. 51–53). Customs declarations valued these works at 7500 francs each, and their frames at an additional 10 francs,⁵⁹ a total of just under \$6000.⁶⁰ Several years later, in 1909,

Tanner set the price of his enormous picture *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* (see fig. 50) at \$15,000 because it was "the result of three years work."⁶¹ Dr. I. M. Cline of New Orleans paid \$600 for *The Good Shepherd* (cat. no. 88) in 1918,⁶² and during the economic boom of the middle 1920s, a version of the Nicodemus theme was commissioned by the Richard Humphreys Foundation through the Cheyney Training School for Teachers for the substantial sum of \$3000.⁶³ Not surprisingly, in the years of the Great Depression, prices for Tanner's pictures plummeted. He wrote in 1935 to a cousin, Maudelle Bousfield, in Chicago:

To buy a picture you come in a very good time. I have two small pictures, a *Hiding of Moses* and *The Flight into Egypt*, size about 24 × 28 inches, for which in ordinary times I would receive from \$350 to \$400 and which I believe are very good examples of my work. I would take two hundred. . . . I am making it especially easy not only on account of the times but because I should like some of my family to have some of my work. On account of the hard times all over the world even some of the most successful artists have temporarily reduced their prices. This is my case.⁶⁴

The vast majority of Tanner's sales occurred in America, and his prices can be compared to those asked by his teacher Thomas Eakins. Early in 1897 the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts bought *The Cello Player* for Eakins's asking price of \$500.⁶⁵ Tanner asked \$1750 for *Nicodemus* and received \$1500; he paid a commission of about 10 percent to his art dealers and others who aided his sales.⁶⁶ Eakins's biographer Lloyd Goodrich has pointed out that Eakins by 1914 was pricing his works anywhere from \$2000 to \$10,000,⁶⁷ but "none of these works shown at these increased prices found buyers," and Eakins returned to more modest rates ranging from \$500 to \$2500.⁶⁸ Tanner's prices were consistent with and even exceeded those paid to his erstwhile teacher. Nevertheless, he often complained about a lack of sales.⁶⁹

Tanner appears to have made a decent living from his artistic production. During the first years at Paris in 1891 to 1893, he "kept a strict account of all money spent, and it amounted to \$365, including tuition and every expense."⁷⁰ A decade later, his earnings allowed for the purchase of a long, one-story peasant house called Les Charmes at Trépied, near Etaples, in the Pas-de-Calais region of northwest France. Tanner spent summers there while maintaining an apartment in Paris and a studio at 51 boulevard Saint-Jacques near the Latin Quarter.⁷¹ However, assistance from patrons and admirers, including Rodman Wanamaker, who subsidized two trips to the Near East, and Tanner's good friend Atherton Curtis, who helped with educational expenses for his son, Jesse, must have been most welcome. Tanner was also able to afford frequent travel during most of his life. In 1921 he sold Les Charmes and built a new house at Trépied,⁷² but in the last decade of his life, the African-American artist found that his straitened circumstances were not so different from that of so many others during the Great Depression.

The attention paid to Henry Ossawa Tanner by the art world during his lifetime also included many awards. Beginning with an honorable mention in 1896 from the Paris Salon, he received some form of important official recognition every decade of his life. Among the awards of the first ten years of this century was the Art Institute of Chicago's Harris Prize for "the most impressive and distinguished work of

art of the season,"⁷³ awarded to *Two Disciples at the Tomb* (cat. no. 59) in 1906. Even more important that year was the second-class medal awarded at the Paris Salon to *The Disciples at Emmaus*, the highest recognition Tanner could receive from the jury since the first-class gold medal was reserved for French artists. With the 1906 medal came the designation of *hors concours*, which allowed Tanner to enter future Salon exhibitions without submitting works to the jury. In 1915 the African-American artist was awarded a gold medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition held at San Francisco. The crowning point of Tanner's career came in 1923 when the French government presented him with the prestigious Cross of the Legion of Honor.⁷⁴

After Tanner's death in 1937, recognition ranged from the issuance of a commemorative stamp by the U.S. Postal Service in 1973 to the designation of a professorship in his name at Morgan State University in Baltimore.⁷⁵

Considering Tanner's widespread fame at the turn of the century, the absence of any evidence indicating his involvement with other famous emigré artists is most curious. From 1934 Tanner lived at 43 rue de Fleurus, near Gertrude Stein's residence at no. 27, where an "improbable mixture of types and nationalities" gathered,⁷⁶ and artists such as Matisse and Picasso often dined. There is no intention to imply that racism pervaded the expatriate community in Paris, yet we cannot say with certainty that Tanner met any of these luminaries. His contact with French artists in the avant-garde circle of Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) is discussed below, but the existing literature does not connect him with such Franco-American artists as his nearly exact contemporary Elizabeth Nourse (1859–1938),⁷⁷ his fellow Philadelphian and student at the Académie Julian, Aston Knight (1873–1948),⁷⁸ nor the expatriate Philadelphian and well-known Impressionist, Mary Cassatt (1845–1926).

But there is no question that Tanner was esteemed by his fellow artists. Their appreciation of his talent started well before he received substantial public recognition in 1897. His teacher at the Académie Julian, Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant (1845–1902), inscribed a picture to Tanner: "To my pupil Tanner from his teacher and friend, ever confident of the success of his accomplishments."⁷⁹ Benjamin-Constant's belief in Tanner's future success was emphasized when the older artist sought him out in Philadelphia during a trip to America in 1894.⁸⁰ Thomas Eakins painted Tanner's portrait in 1902, surely a sign of the two artists' warm relationship. Their friendship must have begun in the 1880s during Tanner's student years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Correspondence during the late 1890s from Harrison S. Morris, managing director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, sheds light on the artist's reputation among colleagues in the United States. Morris wrote to Tanner on April 16, 1897: "The picture *Daniel* was very much admired while it was in our exhibition and, especially, commended by Mr. William M.[erritt] Chase who spoke of it in a public address to his students and privately praised it very often."⁸¹ Morris himself declared the next year: "In offering my sincerest congratulations on your continued success I feel naturally proud in being your fellow countryman."⁸² In the same letter the Academy director requested Tanner to annotate Paris Salon catalogues with his comments on the best American pictures. Then, during the early summer, he referred to the reception of Tanner's *Annunciation* at the Salon, writing that the painter Walter Gay (1856–1937) "tells me that not since Sargent's early triumphs has there been

anything like it."⁸³ Gay was to maintain his high opinion for forty years, later remarking, "Tanner is a great painter."⁸⁴

The sculptor Hermon MacNeil, a longtime friend who shared a studio with Tanner in the 1890s, touched on the high regard and affection in which fellow artists held Tanner. MacNeil wrote to him on December 9, 1930: "Just a little reminder that we are occasionally thinking of you. . . . Last evening at the Arts Club Roundtable dinner I was sitting beside Roy Brown chatting about your good self. . . . Various of your friends here often speak of you in a more choice way. I will not stop to make you blush at this time. I am simply sending you the most pleasant greetings that I am able to wish for a pleasant holiday."⁸⁵

The esteem in which Tanner was held by his fellow artists was not limited to views expressed in the intimacy of letters. He was elected by his peers as an associate member of the National Academy of Design in New York in 1909 and as a full academician in 1927. Between these years, he was invited to serve on the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts jury for the selection of its annual exhibition.⁸⁶ By the summer of 1914, Tanner was elected by his colleagues as President of the Société Artistique de Picardie. The artist and critic Clara T. MacChesney delineated Tanner's status among his colleagues: "H. O. Tanner . . . has long been a member of the Trépied colony and is president of the Art Society of Picardy, Le Touquet. His delightful home is the centre of the colony, and the artist or student from Etaples, of Le Touquet, Paris-Plage, is always sure of a welcome."⁸⁷

Tanner's "delightful" colony home was open to young African-American artists seeking advice and encouragement. Hale Woodruff (1900-80), a black artist from Cairo, Illinois, visited Trépied in 1928; Tanner engaged him in a discussion about art in general and viewed his portfolio.⁸⁸ Woodruff recalled: "It was a brisk day in the late winter, or early spring of 1928, when I took the train from Paris bound for that small town. . . . I was soon to discover that I was on my way to meet a remarkable man of profound intelligence and scholarship, and, as I was also to learn, a man of personal dignity and elegance."⁸⁹

Sudden changes in the world economy and radical shifts in modern aesthetics would force Tanner into relative obscurity by the end of his life. But his art, and his generous and spiritual nature, remained a major source of inspiration for younger painters. The renowned African-American artist Romare Bearden (1914-88) found the quality of self-exploration apparent in Tanner's work to be "vital and transcendent."⁹⁰ The strength and resonance of Tanner's inner vision, which remained constant throughout his career, ultimately account for the lasting relevance of his art.

DEWEY F. MOSBY



The Tanner family, c. 1890. Left to right: Isabella, Halle, her daughter Sadie, Henry, Bishop Tanner, Carlton, Mrs. Tanner, Bertha, Sarah, and Mary.

THE TANNER FAMILY:

A GRANDNIECE'S CHRONICLE

On a cold March evening in 1859 some of the citizenry of Pittsburgh gathered to hear a lecture in the Masonic Hall. Benjamin Tucker Tanner, a twenty-three-year-old black man of medium height and stocky build, was among those in attendance. As Tanner was taking his seat, U.S. Deputy Marshal Bernard Dougherty stepped forward and told him he could not sit in what was designated a white section. When young Tanner refused to move to the black section, Dougherty threw him out of the hall.

For many the matter would have ended there, but Tanner was indignant over his treatment. He hired a lawyer and sued the deputy marshal for assault and battery. A local newspaper supported Tanner's contention, calling him a "young colored man of good character, an intelligent, industrious, sober, young man . . . a native of this city; his father was a native of this city, and his grandfather lived here in 1792."¹ The paper noted that "long before Mr. Dougherty's parents had thought of his existence in the Green Isle, Tanner's father was a citizen of the country."² Court records of the lawsuit were destroyed by fire at the turn of the century, so we don't know its outcome. But Benjamin Tanner's outrage tells us a lot about his character: he was a man of dignity who challenged any form of racial abuse or denial.

The Tanners can trace their origins in the city of Pittsburgh to the eighteenth century through Benjamin Tanner's father (Hugh S. Tanner), grandfather (Herman Tanner), and great-grandfather (Richard Tanner), but other details of the family's history are sketchy.³ Benjamin Tucker Tanner was born on Christmas Day in 1835. Reared in a deeply religious and socially committed family, Benjamin at an early age witnessed his parents' activism and resolve regarding problems of race and class. Hugh, a laborer, and Isabella Tanner were determined that their twelve children would acquire the best possible education. We do not know if his siblings were as fortunate, but Benjamin received a formal education, attending Avery College, a school founded for African-American students by a white abolitionist, Charles Avery, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.⁴ To help pay his tuition, Benjamin worked as a barber. It was perhaps at Avery College that Benjamin met his future wife, Sarah Elizabeth Miller, who was also a student there.

Sarah Miller's origins are not clear. Marcia Mathews, the biographer of Henry Ossawa Tanner, states that Charles Miller, Sarah's father, left Winchester, Virginia, in



Benjamin Tucker Tanner, c. 1870.



Sarah Elizabeth Miller Tanner, 1892.

1846 "for the free state of Pennsylvania, taking his family with him in an oxcart."⁵ The family account, as told to me by my mother, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, a granddaughter of Benjamin and Sarah Tanner, reports that Sarah, born on May 18, 1840, was one of eleven children born to a slave named Elizabeth. Six of Elizabeth's children were fathered by Charles Miller, a freedman who wanted to marry her; five of her children were fathered by the slave master who owned the plantation. Each time Miller saved enough money to purchase Elizabeth's freedom, the slave master increased the price. Finally Elizabeth contacted agents of the Underground Railroad. With their assistance, she put Sarah and her other children in one of the master's double-team wagons, stocked it with food, and sent them away at midnight, never to see them again. When the children arrived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, they were met by members of the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society. Shortly thereafter, the children were divided among various families. Sarah was sent to Pittsburgh.⁶

With his friends and associates, Benjamin Tanner was often stoic, circumspect, and austere. But when he was with Sarah, whom he affectionately called Sadee, he was talkative, relaxed, and attentive. The two were soon engaged. On June 5, 1857, Benjamin wrote to Sarah professing his love and asking reassurance that if they faced a "maelstrom," she would not turn to another. He signed his letter, "Yours now and forever and no one else."⁷ They were married on August 19, 1858, in Pittsburgh.

Upon graduation from Avery College, Benjamin enrolled at Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, where his three years of study in a classical curriculum included Greek and Latin. In 1858 he was licensed to preach, and two years later he was ordained into the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Founded

in 1816 in Philadelphia by Richard Allen, the A.M.E. Church was, according to W. E. B. Du Bois, "the greatest Negro organization in the world."⁸

Henry, the Tanner's first child, was born June 21, 1859. His middle name, Ossawa, was derived from Osawatomie, the town in Kansas where in 1856 the white militant abolitionist John Brown launched his antislavery campaign. John Brown's heroic struggle symbolized for black people their quest for freedom. Thus, for Benjamin and Sarah, Ossawa embodied the hope for emancipation. A few months after Henry's birth, Brown was hanged for leading an antislavery raid on Harpers Ferry.

The Reverend Tanner was ever mindful of the fragility of life. Several children had died who were about the same age as Henry, including his sister Charlotte's daughter Florence, who was just eight months old. Writing in his daybook on January 21, 1860, Tanner said: "Whether the preservation of Henry's life and health will prove a blessing the Lord only knows. For how can I, a mortal man look into the future and see his life, and see whether he will love God and man, or whether he will be an enemy of both. The Lord give us, O give us wisdom to bring him up if at all in the understanding and admonishment of God."⁹

Soon after Henry's first birthday, Tanner was assigned by Bishop Daniel A. Payne of the A.M.E. Church to be a "supply and interim minister" at the prestigious Fifteenth Street Colored Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. When Tanner arrived in the city to assume his duties, free blacks comprised 15 percent of Washington's 75,000 residents. The slave population numbered 3,100. Although blacks were subject to the oppressive Black Codes, which restricted their civil rights and severely limited the areas in which they could purchase or rent property, they were still able to form a closely knit and cohesive community.

As the Reverend Tanner pastored his flock, the political climate in Washington grew ominous; a decade of mounting passion over the issue of slavery was tearing the Union apart. Presidential elections were on the horizon. Although neither black nor white Washingtonians could vote in the election, enthusiasm was high. Everyone knew that the man elected president would decide the fate of the nation. On November 7, 1860, Benjamin Tanner wrote in his daybook: "Abraham Lincoln is elected President of the U.S. As far as I am judge it is for good great excitement. So much so that I was advised not to have church."¹⁰

One week after the election, Washington's real estate market collapsed, and a few days later the local banks suspended specie payments. Although the economy was unstable, on November 19, Tanner sent a check for sixteen dollars to Sarah, who had remained in Pittsburgh, to help pay her passage to Baltimore. Nine days later he met her and young Henry there. After breakfast and a brief rest at the home of "Bro. Read's," a member of his congregation, he and his family took the train to Washington. The brief trip was marred by what Tanner referred to as "American prejudice," the racial discrimination that placed black travelers at the mercy of white passengers and indifferent conductors.

During his eighteen months as minister in Washington, the Reverend Tanner spent long hours reading and preparing his sermons. Early in his career he had established a pattern of hard work, diligence, and a meticulous concern for detail. As an extension of his ministerial duties, in 1861 he founded the Sabbath School for Freedmen in the U.S. Navy Yard. A year later Tanner established the Alexander

Mission for Freedmen on E Street in Washington, the first such mission during the Civil War. In rapid succession he became the pastor at Georgetown in 1863; at Frederick, Maryland, in 1864, and at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baltimore in 1866.

Tanner wrote on January 10, 1866: "I was in my study this morning at six, having been kept up late last night. 5 o'clock is the time usually for me to be at my studies. This morning I devoted as usual to my languages, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew."¹¹ In another daybook entry on January 26, he wrote of how much time his studies consumed and how they interfered with his responsibilities as a pastor: "Ten hours of the 24 are spent in my study. I have a burning desire to feel as I know a Priest ought to feel: but, my studies, they consume me, and I am compelled to it."¹²

Tanner was writing a manuscript on the A.M.E. Church, and it was probably the demands of this important task, coupled with his waning interest in the ministry, that caused him to leave the pulpit of Bethel Church in 1866 and return to Frederick, Maryland, for a new post as principal of the A.M.E. Conference School of Freedmen. The Freedman's Society also secured his services in organizing a common school. While Tanner moved from one assignment to another, his family grew: Halle was born in 1864; Mary Louise, my grandmother, in 1865; and Isabella in 1867.

By this time Tanner had completed his first book, *An Apology for African Methodism* (1867). An impressive volume of 468 pages, it presented one of the first intellectual and theological accounts of the schisms between the black and white Methodist churches. Tanner also briefly outlined the history of the A.M.E. Church, and the confluence of its African heritage, the Methodist form of worship, and the Episcopal hierarchical structure.

A critical success, Tanner's book was enthusiastically received by the religious community. Within the A.M.E. Church he was highly respected and viewed as a brilliant ecclesiastical scholar. It was not surprising therefore that the general conference of the A.M.E. Church, meeting in 1868, elected Tanner to be editor of the denomination's widely influential newspaper, the *Christian Recorder*, a post he would hold until 1884. The Tanners moved to Philadelphia and settled in a home on Third and Pine streets, just a few blocks from the building that housed the offices of the newspaper.¹³

With Tanner as editor, the *Christian Recorder* now turned from a solely religious outlook to encompass secular topics. Through his editorials Tanner addressed the major issues facing African-Americans in the nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1880 the black population in Philadelphia had increased 68 percent. Blacks were attracted to the city because of jobs but found themselves in direct competition with European immigrants. In the pages of the *Christian Recorder* Tanner followed the changing demographics of the community and railed against the loss of jobs by African-Americans to the new arrivals from Europe. These were mostly jobs "in service," and although Tanner envisioned more skilled jobs for blacks, he was "realistic when these may be the only jobs we can get to feed our families."¹⁴ A series of articles he wrote on the immigration of blacks to Africa revived an old controversy. Tanner opposed emigration, believing that blacks with training and education were needed in America to help build a strong middle class. A contrary view was taken by an eminent black nationalist, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the A.M.E. Church. The heated exchange between the two thinkers soon expanded to include prominent black spokesmen such as Frederick Douglass (1817-95), who generally subscribed to

Tanner's position. Most African-Americans opposed emigration, concluding that after suffering the ravages of slavery, black people in America would not be aided by sending their most talented professionals to live and work in Africa.¹⁵

Tanner's ecclesiastical and secular writings won him the recognition of his undergraduate school, Avery College, from which he was given an honorary M.A. degree in 1870. That same year another son, Carlton, was born to the Tanner family, which by now had grown too large for their little house on Pine Street. In 1872 Tanner purchased an eight-room house at 2908 Diamond Street in North Philadelphia. Two more daughters followed – Sarah Elizabeth, born in 1873, and the last child, Bertha, in 1878. (Two other children did not survive infancy.) Although she was busy caring for her family, Sarah Tanner found time to organize the Mite Missionary Society of the A.M.E. Church, one of the earliest societies of black women in America.

The Tanner home soon became a place for leading black and white clergymen to participate in learned discussions on theological and secular matters. Noted black historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson deemed the home "the center of the black intellectual community in Philadelphia,"¹⁶ and within this stimulating atmosphere the seven Tanner children were encouraged to succeed. Later, during the early years of Henry's artistic career, Reverend Tanner's professional circle provided his son with ready encouragement and support. He spent one winter sketching and painting in Florida as the guest of Bishop Daniel A. Payne, his father's friend and superior in the A.M.E. Church. Henry benefited also from his association with Bishop Joseph Crane Hartzell, another of his father's colleagues. Bishop Hartzell and his wife, whom Henry met in Atlanta, helped him secure a teaching position in 1889 at Clark University, and later sponsored the first exhibition of his works at the Methodist Book Concern in Cincinnati.

My mother, who lived with her grandparents as a small child, recalled some of the more quotidian details of the Diamond Street household:

Food was never considered a matter on which one should spend precious hours of his life. I can so well remember that we children were not even allowed to discuss what we enjoyed eating. The attitude of our grandparents was that food was to be eaten only to keep the body well, so that one could work, not give pleasure. My maternal grandfather (Benjamin T. Tanner), a prolific writer, would eat only fruit, cereal, tea and/or milk in the morning. Frequently, we children would have to wait until almost 2:00 p.m. for the noon day meal, because Grandpa was writing in his study and would not stop, saying that if he stopped to eat, his mind would become dull because the blood previously supplying his mind would be used to help the stomach take care of the food.¹⁷

Along with these daily measures of discipline, the Reverend Tanner also showed a loving side. To celebrate Halle's eighteenth birthday, he wrote a poem joyfully recounting the progress of her years, and encouraging her to "be, my daughter, like the river/be an earnest, happy liver."¹⁸

In 1881 the Reverend Tanner went to London to attend the Ecumenical Conference of Methodism. His visit lasted three months and was chronicled in the *Christian Recorder*. Perhaps the most poignant account was written on Tanner's return to Philadelphia, when he contrasted his life in Europe with that in America. In words laced with anger, he spoke of being denied service with whites in a restaurant and of being unable to sit in a railroad car next to white women or children in the



Carlton Tanner, c. 1890.

United States, but that while in Europe he had been unencumbered in his travels. Tanner mused about a time in the future, perhaps "fifty years hence and caste will be dead. The grandchildren of the present generation will experience little, if any, of it [discrimination]."¹⁹

Henry too experienced the hardships of racism, especially when white art teachers in Philadelphia refused to take him as a pupil. He found support for his ambitions from men such as Jacob C. White, principal of the Roberts Vaux Grammar School and an important leader in the local African-American community, as well as from his father and the pages of the *Christian Recorder*. In the early 1870s, Henry might have read there about the travels and studies of the artist Edmonia Lewis, whose sculpture Tanner would see in 1876 at the Centennial Exposition, along with paintings by the black artist Edward Mitchell Bannister. Benjamin Tanner, writing in the *Christian Recorder*, had expressed his concern that black artists be included in the exposition.

The Reverend Tanner completed a major book on African Methodist Episcopal Church history in 1884 and later that year launched the *A.M.E. Church Review*. One of the first church magazines published by blacks for a national audience, the *Review* provided its readers with a rich variety of articles on social and political issues of particular interest to African-Americans. William J. Simmons described the *Review* as "one of the most scholarly productions of the age, and its list of writers includes all classes of thinkers and writers of all denominations, male and female."²⁰

Nearly all of Benjamin Tanner's time was devoted to editing the *Review*. His oldest daughter, Halle, worked in the magazine's office, but her mind was not always on her work. She had fallen in love with a tall handsome man, Charles E. Dillon, from Trenton, New Jersey, and following a brief courtship they were married in the Tanner home in June 1886. The bride was elegant and beautiful with "many richly dressed ladies in attendance."²¹ A year later Halle and Charles became the proud parents of a little girl, Sadie. The first grandchild of the Reverend and Mrs. Tanner, Sadie was naturally showered with affection. But tragedy struck this young family when Charles Dillon died. Their joy and tranquillity shattered, Halle and her daughter moved into the house on Diamond Street.

After several months, Halle set aside her grief, and at twenty-four she entered medical school at Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. Women's Medical was established in 1850 because no orthodox medical school in the city would train female students. The school graduated its first black student, Rebecca Cole, in 1867, but only a few blacks graduated in the interim; Halle was the only black student in her class.

In 1888, Benjamin Tanner was elected a bishop of the A.M.E. Church. He could no longer act as editor of the *Review*, but his appointment did not curtail his output of scholarly publications, and he continued to be an ardent evangelist for his emancipated people.

Before Henry left Philadelphia in 1891 to study art in Europe, the Tanners posed for a family portrait. Benjamin Tanner is seated in the center of the photograph

in a high-back, brocaded chair, his eyes fixed. His wife is to his left; the seven Tanner children and the first grandchild, each elegantly dressed and strikingly handsome, surround the bishop and Sarah.

In 1891 Halle completed her three-year course of study at Women's Medical. Before graduation, she had written to Booker T. Washington, founder and president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, asking him to consider her for a job at the school. Washington offered her the position of resident physician, informing Halle that the job paid "\$600 a year with board for twelve months' work, including one month of vacation."²² Moreover, he added, "This is with the understanding that you would teach two classes a day, if necessary, and take full charge of the health department. We should expect you to compound your own medicine as far as possible."²³ Halle and Washington met in Philadelphia in the spring of that year, and he assured her and her father that the institute would be the right place for a young black woman doctor to begin her career.

At the beginning of August, Halle arrived in Tuskegee, Alabama, a small town of three thousand, half of whom were black. This was a long way from her cosmopolitan hometown. Halle must have been viewed by the students and residents not only with curiosity but with pride, since she was the first woman physician most had ever met. After becoming acquainted with the facilities, Halle left several days later for Montgomery to prepare for the medical board tests. Washington had arranged for her to study for the strenuous exams with Dr. Cornelius Nathaniel Dorsette, who practiced medicine in Montgomery and was the first black physician to pass the Alabama medical boards.²⁴

In a letter to Washington, Bishop Tanner expressed his concern for Halle's success: "Of course, we are all anxious about the Doctor. Not that we have any misgivings as to her ability to pass any reasonable and just examination. But we know that both her sex and her color will be against her."²⁵ Washington accompanied Halle to the capitol building on the first day of the exhausting, difficult exams, which lasted ten days. But Halle passed, with a score of 78.8,²⁶ to become the first woman ever admitted on examination to practice medicine in Alabama.²⁷

From 1891 to 1894 Dr. Dillon served as resident physician of Tuskegee Institute. Attempting to address social inequities, she charged her private patients only twenty-five cents for medicines — many of which she prepared — and ten cents for a house call.²⁸ White physicians charged two dollars per mile for a visit, with an additional fee for medicine.²⁹ During her tenure at Tuskegee Dr. Dillon also established the Lafayette Dispensary and Nurses' Training School. In 1894 she married the Reverend John Quincy Johnson, and they eventually moved to Nashville. Halle bore three sons and died in childbirth in April 1901.

While Halle was establishing herself as a doctor, Henry was maturing as an artist and traveling between Europe and the United States, with occasional side trips to the Middle East. These productive times for the young artist were given yet another exciting dimension when he met Jessie Macauley Olssen in 1898. A white woman of



Halle Tanner, c. 1890.



Henry Ossawa Tanner, c. 1900.



Jessie Tanner, c. 1905.

Swedish-Scottish ancestry, Jessie was born in San Francisco, where her father was in the shipbuilding industry. She was a tall, attractive woman whose sparkling, ebullient personality was a pleasant complement to Henry's quiet reserve. Henry, however, balked at marriage, but while on his second trip to the Near East in 1898–99, he received a telegram from Jessie which read: "Come to me."³⁰ If Henry had any uncertainty about marrying a white woman, it vanished, and on December 14, 1899, they were married in London. Jessie's sister, Elna, and a Dutch friend, Gerhoodt C. Mars, served as witnesses. Their parents were unable to attend the wedding but sent their blessings. About four years later, on September 25, 1903, the couple's son and only child, Jesse Ossawa Tanner, was born in New York City.

Henry was increasingly acclaimed as an artist, and his rising celebrity caused aspiring artists to seek his assistance and endorsement. During the fall of 1899 the niece of a Philadelphia friend came to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The young artist, Meta Vaux Warrick (Fuller), became famous for her remarkable sculpture. Henry had planned to meet Warrick at the station, but for some unknown reason he did not appear. She took a taxi to the American Girls Club, but when the resident director saw Warrick, she exclaimed: "Why didn't you tell me you were not a white girl?" Henry was contacted, and he immediately secured her a room at a small hotel. Warrick was the first of many black artists who called on Henry for advice, support, and fellowship – which he gave based on ability, not race.

While Henry was winning prizes and selling paintings, his father was as active as ever. In September 1901 he was in London as a delegate to the Third Ecumenical Conference on Methodism, where he read a paper on the "Elements of Pulpit

Effectiveness." Henry and Jessie visited London during the bishop's stay, and they found him strong and vigorous at sixty-six years of age.

The rest of the family was settling down. Mary Louise, Henry's favorite sister and my grandmother, who was thirty-five years old at the turn of the century, was married to Aaron Mossell, a young lawyer from Lockport, New York. Mossell was the first black person to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He would later abandon Mary and his three children and move to Cardiff, Wales. One of Mary's daughters, Sadie, my mother, was distinguished in her own right, becoming the second black woman in America to receive a Ph.D., and the first in economics. She was not only the first black woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School but the first to pass the bar and practice in the state. She married Raymond Pace Alexander, with whom she established a lifelong law practice. My father, an eminent jurist, was also an outstanding city councilman in Philadelphia.

Carlton Tanner, who had attended theological school, was by this time in South Africa working as managing editor of the *South African Christian Recorder*. Subsequently he would write a number of books on the history and polity of his church. He married Frances Stanford, a trained nurse, who was unstinting in her support of Carlton's ministry. Isabella Tanner had married the Reverend Noah Temple and was living in Pittsburgh. Bertha Tanner had married Samuel Patterson Stafford, a member of the first four-year class in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and had settled in St. Louis. Sarah Elizabeth married Lewis B. Moore, the first black to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Later, at Howard University, Dr. Moore was instrumental in organizing the Teacher's College. The Moores' son, Lewis, was educated at Storer College and Bates, and received a law degree from Temple University. A daughter, Sarah Moore Pride, taught school in New York.

Given Henry's growing stature and the bishop's demanding schedule, it is little wonder that several years passed before the entire family assembled once again. They finally gathered in the winter of 1908 to celebrate Bishop and Mrs. Tanner's fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was a festive occasion, although no doubt the race riots that had marred the summer were discussed. Those relatives who could not attend sent warm regards to the patriarch and his wife, including the bishop's three living sisters, Nancy, Mary, and Charlotte.

Nancy was married to the Reverend Lewis Woodson, a minister in the A.M.E. Church who had been a teacher at a popular school for African-Americans in Pittsburgh before the Civil War. Mrs. Woodson had eleven children, most of whom rose to distinction. Mary, the bishop's youngest sister, was also married to a minister, the Reverend John Russell. Mary and her husband were committed to religious and educational work, and all of their children attended college.

The bishop's niece, Arrena, was married to Charles H. Brown, a teacher in the St. Louis public schools for more than half a century. Of her four children, Maudelle



Jessie Tanner holding Jesse,
October–November 1903.

would achieve the most acclaim. She married Midian O. Bousfield, who was a colonel in the army during the Second World War. She graduated from the Mendelssohn Conservatory of Music, and after teaching at several schools in Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore, Maudelle served as dean of girls at Phillips High School in Chicago and later became the first person of her race to be named principal of a Chicago public school. Maudelle earned a national reputation, particularly for her exemplary work with the large number of black migrants who flowed into Chicago from the South. She demonstrated to many skeptical white educators that a black woman could function successfully not only as a teacher but also as a supervisor.

Bishop Tanner died on January 15, 1923, several months before the family received the good news that Henry had been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Henry considered his citation by the French government to be the greatest honor of his illustrious career. Another joyous family event took place that year when the bishop's nephew, Benjamin T. Johnson, Halle's son by the Reverend J. Q. Johnson, married Mary Parker of Boston.

Two years after his father's death, however, Henry faced another loss: his beloved Jessie died on September 8, 1925. His son, Jesse, was his only consolation, but he was completing his education at the London School of Mines. Within a year the two were reunited as Jesse returned home to care for his father and to recover from his own mental exhaustion. Henry's concern about his son's health forced him to set aside his own despair. Soon he was painting with greater regularity and anticipating a round of New York exhibitions. He would continue working, albeit with decreasing vigor, until his death on May 25, 1937.

Henry Ossawa Tanner was a complex man who was unwilling to compromise his integrity or his humanism. In the same way that his family fought for civil rights in America, Henry waged a determined struggle against the social and historical factors that sought to limit his artistic expression. His residency in Europe was not a retreat from the political issues facing his people; he needed this distance to paint freely the stories he had heard at his father's knee and in his father's churches. "In his religious painting," the late artist Romare Bearden commented, "Tanner tells us much of what he thinks about the world and of man's place in it. This kind of self-exploration when integrated by a personality of real proportion can be both vital and transcendent."³¹

Bearden's perception was echoed and extended by my cousin, Jesse O. Tanner. He recalled: "My father always worked very hard on his pictures and they were painted very slowly. If you study them, you keep discovering new things about them — a new form is revealed, a new star seems to shine, a new shadow stretches out — in a word, his pictures are very much alive. A Tanner can do more than give you enjoyment, it can come to your rescue, it can reaffirm your confidence in man and his destiny, it can help you surmount your difficulties or console you in distress."³²

Having explored the Tanner roots in the United States, I set out in 1984 to discover the Tanner connection in Europe. My mother's memories had been silenced due to severe illness, so I turned to historical records and the reflections of other relatives. One of the first I sought was Jesse. From his correspondence with my

mother, I knew that he was eighty-one years old and lived in Le Douhet, a small village in southwest France. Of course the letters did not change the fact that Jesse and I were strangers. He knew nothing about me and little about the rest of his relatives in America, and perhaps he wanted to keep it that way.

I wrote to Jesse and suggested a meeting, which he discouraged by various strategies. But I was determined, even after he wired a telegram saying that it would not be possible for me to visit him. When we did meet, he still seemed to resent my presence, as if he were fearful of opening old wounds, or of having to probe once more into the reality of who he was and his own ambivalence about his family. Eventually though, over some delicious potato soup and a few fond memories, he warmed to me and slowly began to reveal portions of our common ancestry. Jesse opened his arms to me and, speaking for all of my French relatives, said, "We have grown to love you." Like the thread Ariadne gave Theseus to solve the labyrinth, Jesse, with a smile and soft words, provided me with both encouragement and with an aperture through which to survey my family's origins.

It was my good fortune to meet and talk with Jesse when I did; in May 1985 he died. In the end he had shared some of his private feelings and allowed me to forage among his father's diaries and documents. From this vast assortment of memorabilia I learned that Henry Tanner was not so absorbed in his work that he ignored the plight of other artists. He often opened his home and studio to black American artists, such as William Henry Johnson, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, Laura Wheeler Waring, Aaron Douglas, and Hale Woodruff, all of whom sought his advice and counsel when in Paris. While reading a passel of his letters, I discovered that my granduncle never considered himself an expatriate; in fact he eschewed the word. He believed he did not have the luxury of being an expatriate, a privilege, as James Baldwin would suggest years later, accorded only to white Americans.

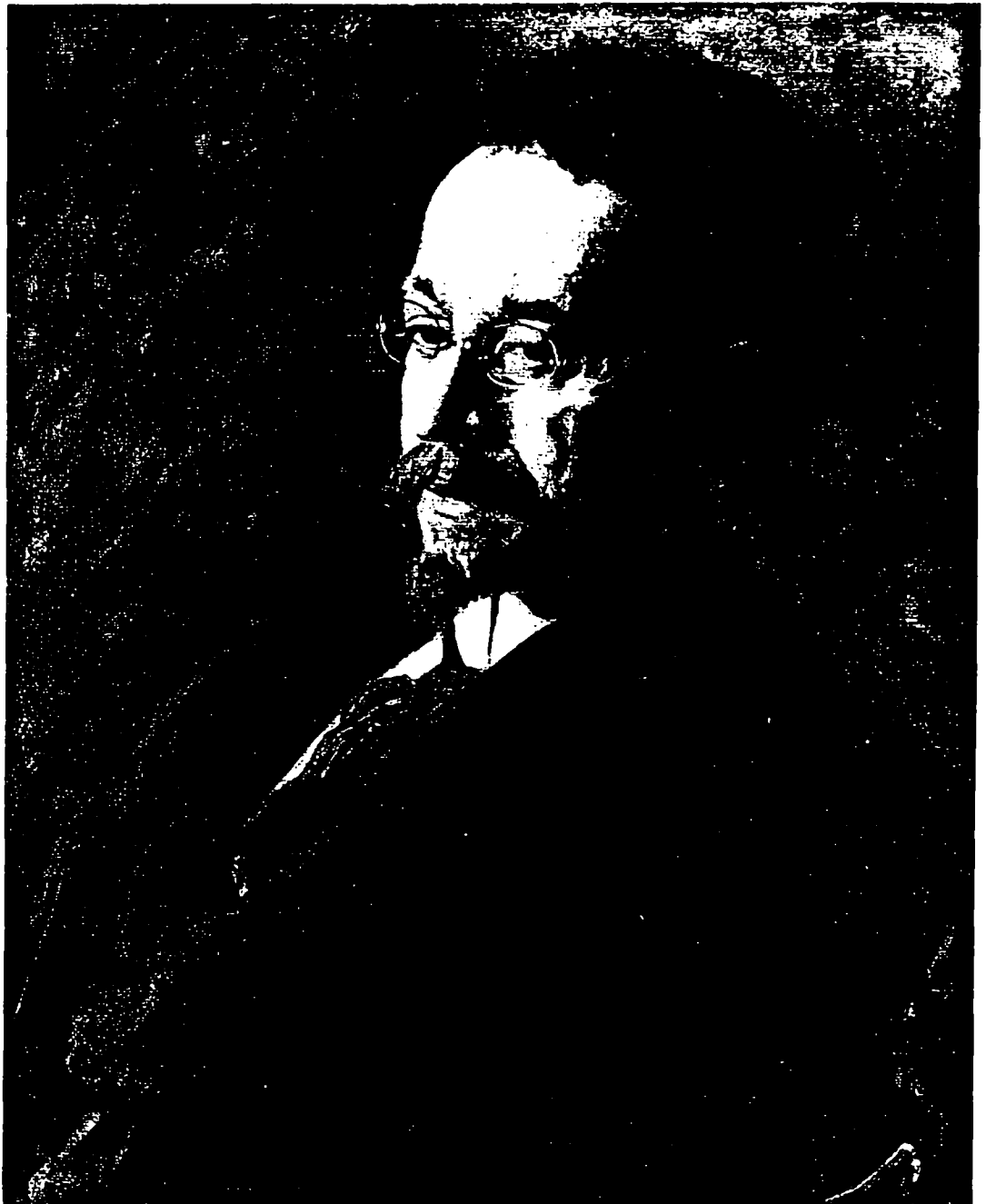
Henry Tanner was a quiet, self-effacing, and talented man whose work influenced the development of black art in America. He made it possible for generations of black artists to compete in the world of art, giving them an example of how to create without capitulating to rampant racism. In myriad ways he was continuing a legacy passed on to him by his noble father. There is much to glean from the exemplary life of a man who would brook no compromise and insisted, as his son wrote of him, "that man has an active role to play and should not submit passively to his fate."³³ I am convinced that there was neither submission nor surrender in the art and life of Henry Ossawa Tanner.

RAE ALEXANDER-MINTER

CHRONOLOGY

KATHLEEN JAMES

SYLVIA YOUNT



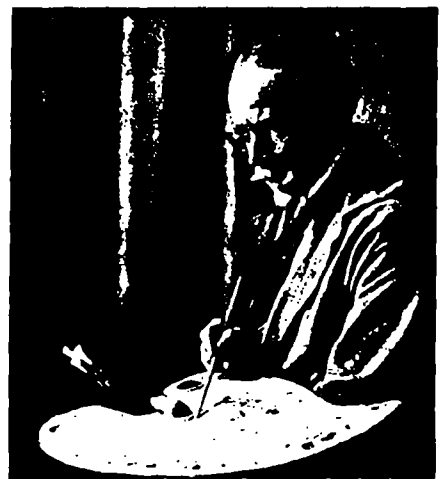
Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Henry O. Tanner*, 1900, oil on canvas,
24 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York.

HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

1859-1937

My effort has been to not only put the Biblical incident in the original setting . . . but at the same time give the human touch "which makes the whole world kin" and which ever remains the same.

The most distinguished African-American artist of the nineteenth century, Henry Ossawa Tanner was also the first artist of his race to achieve international acclaim. Tanner was born on June 21, 1859, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Benjamin Tucker and Sarah Miller Tanner. Tanner's father was a college-educated teacher and minister who later became a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Sarah Tanner was a former slave whose mother had sent her north to Pittsburgh through the Underground Railroad. Tanner's family moved frequently during his early years when his father was assigned to various churches and schools. In 1864 Tanner's family settled in Philadelphia where his early artistic interests were developed. At age thirteen, Tanner decided to become an artist when he saw a painter at work during a walk in Fairmount Park near his home. Throughout his teens, Tanner painted and drew constantly in his spare time and tried to look at art as much as possible in Philadelphia art galleries. He also studied briefly with two of the city's minor painters.



Eager to discourage his son's interest in art, Bishop Tanner apprenticed him to a friend to learn the milling business. For Tanner, a frail young man whose health was never strong throughout his life, the work in the flour mill proved too strenuous and he became seriously ill. His parents encouraged his painting during his recuperation, and Tanner lived at home during the next few years except for several trips to the Adirondack Mountains and Florida for his health. In 1880, when Tanner was twenty-one, he enrolled in the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. There he studied with a group of master professors including Thomas Eakins. It was Eakins who exerted the greatest influence on Tanner's early style. Tanner left the Pennsylvania Academy prior to graduating to pursue the idea of combining business with art. In 1888 he

The Savior, ca. 1900-05,
oil on wood, 29 1/8 x 21 7/8 in.

Fishermen at Sea, ca. 1913,
oil on canvas, 46 x 35 1/4 in.

moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and established a modest photography gallery where he attempted to earn a semiartistic living by selling drawings, making photographs, and teaching art classes at Clark College. In spite of his combined efforts, Tanner's Atlanta venture barely profited enough to provide living expenses.

In Atlanta, Tanner met Bishop and Mrs. Joseph Crane Hartzell, who became his primary white patrons over the next several years. In the summer of 1888 Tanner sold his small gallery and moved to Highlands, North Carolina, in the Blue Ridge Mountains where he hoped to study and earn a living by his photography. He also felt that the mountains would be good for his delicate health. While there, Tanner may have made many sketches and photographs of the region and its African-American residents, some of which were later used as subjects in his most important early paintings.

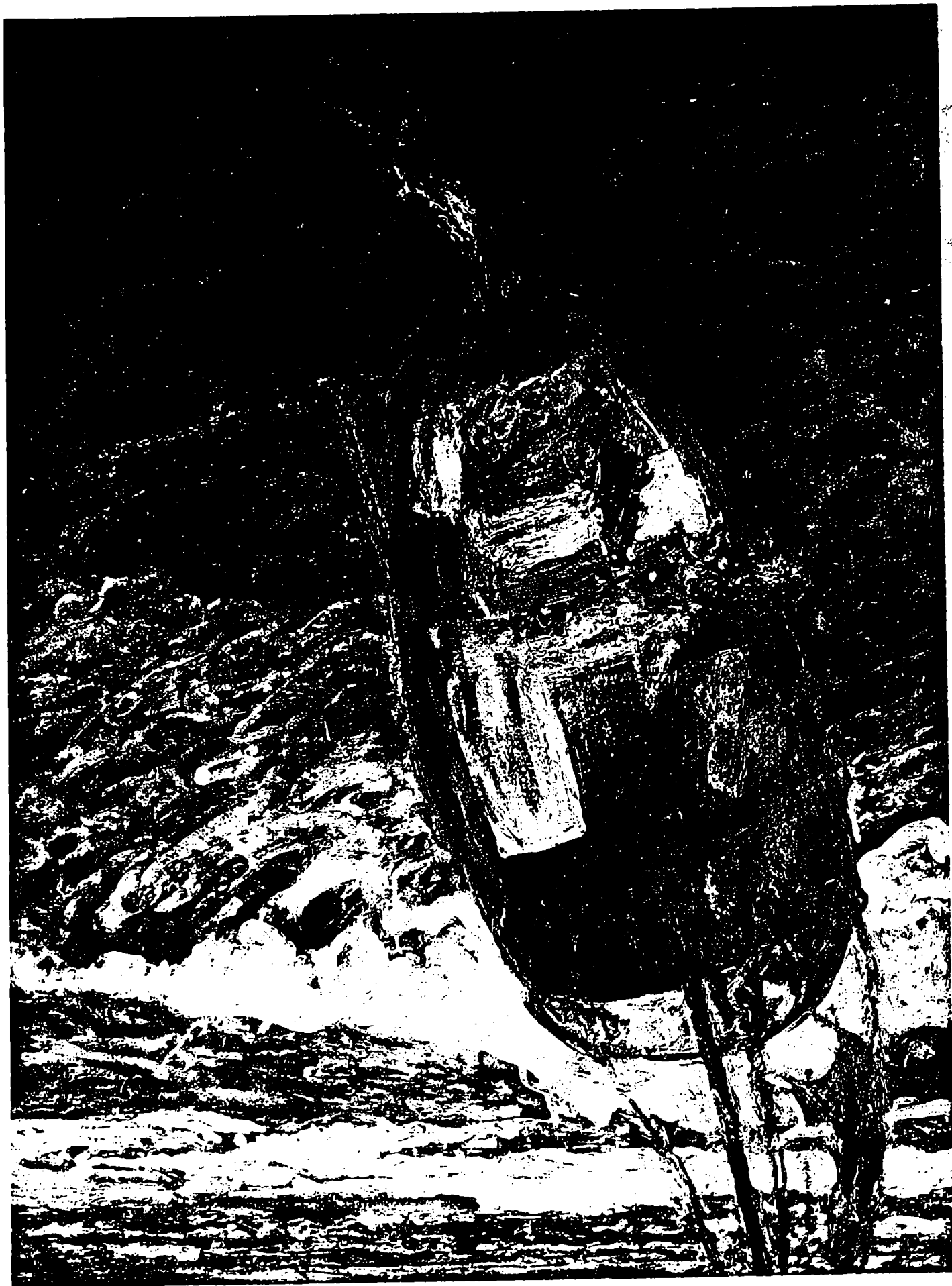
In the fall of 1888, Tanner returned to Atlanta and taught drawing for two years at Clark College. After discussing his ambitions to travel abroad with Bishop and Mrs. Hartzell, they arranged an exhibition of Tanner's works in Cincinnati in the fall of 1890. When no paintings were sold, the Hartzells bought the entire collection. This endowment allowed Tanner to sail for Rome in January 1891. After brief stays in Liverpool and London, Tanner arrived in Paris. He was so impressed by this center of art and artists that he abandoned his plans to study in Rome.

In Paris, Tanner enrolled in the Académie Julian where the painters Jean Paul Laurens and Jean Joseph Benjamin-Constant were among his teachers. It was not long before he painted two of his most important works depicting African-American subjects, *The Banjo Lesson* of 1893 and *The Thankful Poor* of 1894. During the summers of 1892 and 1893, Tanner left Paris and lived in isolated rural areas in Brittany. His best-known paintings from that period are *The Bagpipe Lesson* of 1894 and *The Young Sabot Maker* of 1895. Both depict French peasants, and Tanner assimilated the inhabitants of his rural French environment into his works as he had done previously in the mountains of Highlands, North Carolina.

In 1895, Tanner painted *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, which won an honorable mention in the Paris Salon the same year. Two years later he completed *Resurrection of Lazarus*, which so impressed Rodman Wanamaker, a Philadelphia merchant in Paris, that he decided to finance the first of Tanner's several trips to the Holy Land. Before leaving, Tanner sent his *Resurrection of Lazarus* to the Paris Salon where it was awarded a third class medal and was purchased by the French government for exhibition at the Luxembourg Gallery and eventually entered the collection of the Louvre.

Spurred by his newly found acclaim, Tanner visited Philadelphia for several months in 1893. The visit, however, convinced him that he could not fight racial prejudice. Tanner returned to Paris and focused on painting religious subjects and landscapes. In 1899 Tanner married Jessie Olssen, a white opera singer from

Un-
pan



Salome, ca. 1900, oil on
canvas, 46 x 35 1/4 in.



San Francisco, whom he had met in Paris. The couple's only child, Jesse Ossawa, was born in New York in 1903. Their marriage may have influenced Tanner's decision to settle permanently in France, where the family divided its time between Paris and a farm near Étapes in Normandy.

During the final decades of Tanner's career he enjoyed consistent acclaim. In 1900, his 1895 painting, *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, was awarded a silver medal at the Universal Exposition in Paris; the following year it received a silver medal at the Pan-American exhibition in Buffalo.



Angels Appearing Before the Shepherds, ca. 1910, oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 32 in.

In 1908 his first one-man exhibition of religious paintings in the United States was held at the American Art Galleries in New York. Two years later, Tanner was elected a member of the National Academy of Design. In 1923 he was made an honorary chevalier of the Order of the Legion of Honor, France's highest honor, and in 1927 he became a full academician of the National Academy of Design, the first African American to receive that honor. In his later years, Tanner was a symbol of hope and inspiration for African-American leaders and young black artists, many of whom visited him in Paris. On May 25, 1937, Tanner died at his home in Paris.

MARY

After 1895 Tanner specialized in religious subjects, perhaps because of his religious upbringing and his own intense personal faith. Mary, the mother of Christ, appears frequently in Tanner's religious paintings, and probably repre-

Mary, ca. 1914,
oil on canvas, 40 x 36 in.

sented for Tanner a symbol of strength and courage. After experiencing the particular brutality of World War I living in France, he painted Mary as a solitary figure in contemplative poses several times. These paintings are basically devoid of narrative and depict the Virgin in melancholic moods.

This version was probably completed around 1914 since it was exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Françaises during the summer of 1914 and illustrated in *International Studio* in November of the same year. Mary is seated on a couch in a small space defined by a wall hanging, to the left behind the slotted backrest, and a broad barrel-vault ceiling in the shallow foreground space. Placed to the left of the painting, Mary gazes toward an unknown subject at the right.

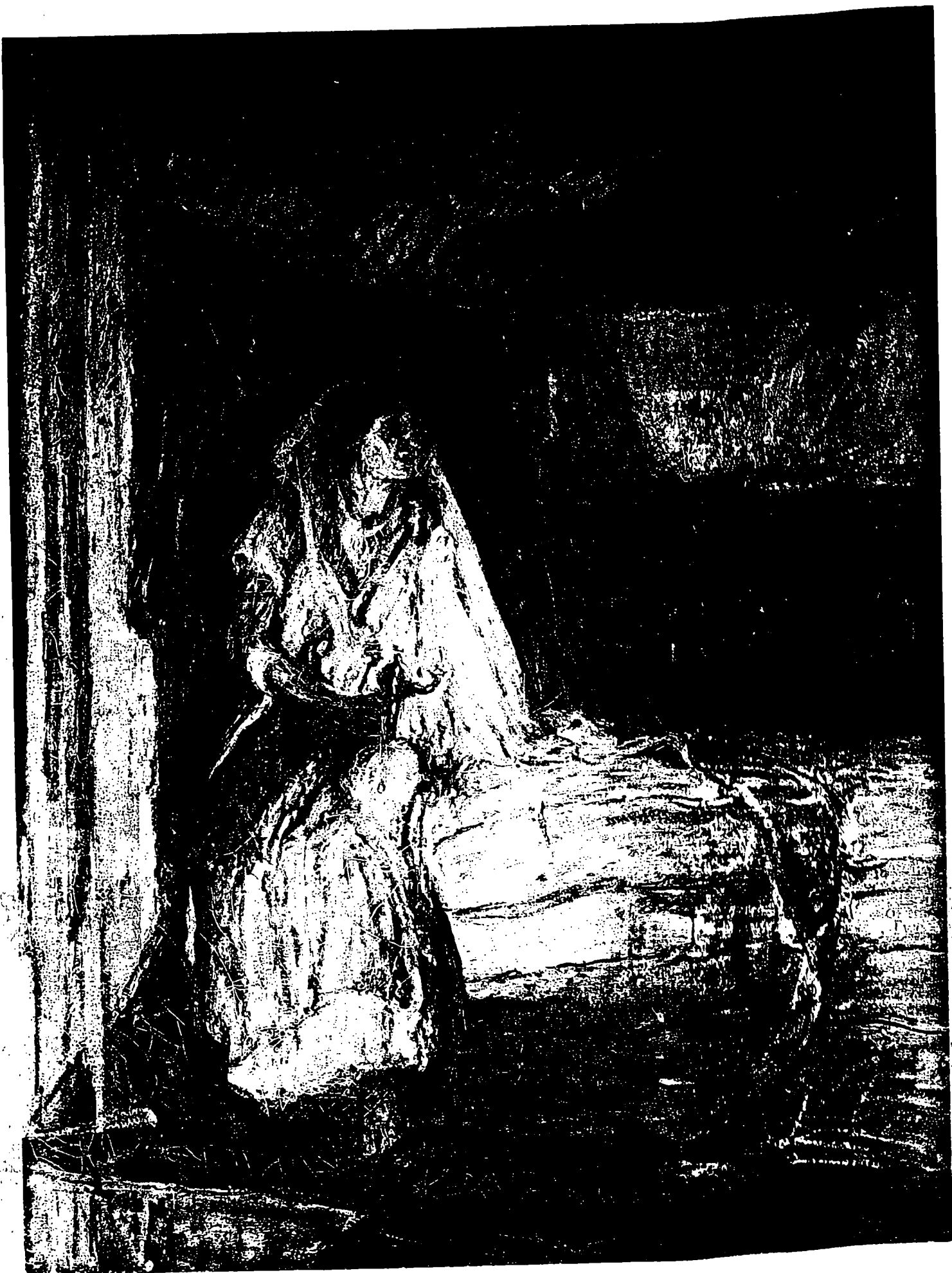
The painting's predominant muted blues and mauves are the colors that characterize Tanner's late works. So too are the layers of thick impasto that render details in this painting indistinct. Tanner's loose brushwork and tonal palette were influenced respectively by French Symbolist and Impressionist painting.

Here, Tanner's dramatically handled light comes from two sources—the lamp that Mary holds on her lap and a vertical shaft of light at the left that comes from a doorway or corridor that is not visible. The model for Mary was probably Tanner's wife, Jessie Olssen, who frequently served as the model for female subjects in his religious paintings.

The apparent absence of the Christ Child, or even the suggestion of His presence by a halo, is unusual. The *International Studio* essay of November 1914 noted that Mary "is waiting, lamp in hand, ready to render service to her beloved Lord," suggesting that Tanner has chosen a meditative moment before the Annunciation. Mary is shown as pure and spiritual, yet unaware of her future role as the mother of Christ.

On the back of this painting is an unfinished oil sketch of two men and a woman; the subject matter is currently unknown. In the interest of economy, Tanner often worked on both sides of his canvases and on occasion even painted over earlier works. This sketch provides an excellent example of Tanner's academically instilled method of constructing figures and facial expressions.

Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, *Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth-Century America* (Washington D.C., published for National Museum of American Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 106.



Re994

HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
AND CATALOGUE CHAPTERS BY
DEWEY F. MOSBY

CATALOGUE ENTRIES BY
DEWEY F. MOSBY AND DARREL SEWELL

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY BY
RAE ALEXANDER-MINTER

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK



Henry Ossawa Tanner, c. 1935.

REFLECTIONS ON RACE, PUBLIC RECEPTION, AND CRITICAL RESPONSE IN TANNER'S CAREER

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937) emerged as one of the best known and most highly esteemed artists of his time in both the United States and France. One contemporary critic stated in 1911: "He makes his home continuously in Paris, where many claim that he is the greatest artist that America has produced."¹ Tanner was the first black artist to acquire an international reputation in this century,² and he remains well known today in museum and academic circles, although his name is not familiar to a more general audience. It is the aim of this exhibition and catalogue to present his life's work in a fuller context; this essay seeks to give a historical overview of certain paradoxes that arise in any assessment of Tanner. For example, as an artist he has been discussed concurrently by French critics as a history painter and by their American counterparts as a religious painter, while other writers disregarded his subjects altogether in order to concentrate on his style or technique.³ These diverse responses have their roots in the evolution of his work; Tanner pursued traditional modes with an often striking individualism.

Primary among the questions to be addressed at the outset is Tanner's race and his attitude toward it in relation to his career, because this issue is at the core of much of what has been said about him. His parents gave him the middle name Ossawa in tribute to the abolitionist John Brown of Osawatimie, and Tanner was fortified with a solid grounding in racial issues from his father, Benjamin Tucker Tanner, who tackled the subject as early as 1869 in the small book with the startling title *The Negro's Origins and Is the Negro Cursed*. The Reverend Tanner wrote: "No people now exists who can trace more clearly their paternity than the Negro. The genealogical table of the Negro, written in his own flesh, remains. Ages of scouring have not sufficed to erase it. Written by the finger of God, it is more enduring than the stones of Sinai. It remains, and will remain the badge of our suffering, the triumph."⁴ Benjamin Tanner's lifelong and forthright pursuit of social justice and his defiance of prejudice must have been powerfully stimulating for his children.

An excellent introduction to the link between Tanner's development as an artist and his race, and the plight of many creative black people in general, is articulated by a biographer of the talented poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906): "The black writer must not merely live in two worlds; he inevitably writes for two worlds. Whatever he writes is affected by what Ralph Ellison has called 'the complex

relationship between the Negro-American subculture and North American culture as a whole.'"⁵ Tanner can be said to have painted for three worlds—for Paris, for America, and for African-Americans—and surely he was conscious of the responses of each.

Tanner was celebrated as an artist by African-American intellectuals from the outset of his career. After only a short period as a professional painter, he was included, together with artist Edward Mitchell Bannister (1828–1901), in William J. Simmons's biographical study of black leaders entitled *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising*, published in 1887.⁶ By 1898 Tanner's name was linked with Dunbar's and with the great educator Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) in a letter to Washington from an admirer: "God has undoubtedly exalted you to be our Moses. We read about you in the greatest papers and magazines published in our great country—Washington, Tanner, and Dunbar. We stand before them with uncovered heads. We follow them without questioning their right to lead."⁷

Washington himself knew the Tanner family and was deeply impressed by Henry's achievement as an artist. In *Up from Slavery* he wrote about seeing Tanner's work on view at the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris: "Few people ever stopped, I found, when looking at his pictures, to inquire whether Mr. Tanner was a Negro painter, a French painter, a German painter. They simply knew that he was able to produce something which the world wanted—a great painting—and the matter of his color did not enter into their minds."⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), the distinguished black scholar who demanded full and immediate equality for African-Americans, in contrast to Washington's emphasis on first achieving economic parity, also knew Tanner and cited him in a 1901 article in the *Dial* as one of a vital group of black leaders who "seek . . . that self development and self realization in all lines of human endeavor which they believe will eventually place the Negro beside the other races."⁹

In 1908, an essay by an anonymous American writer drew together a number of themes, exemplifying the complex problem of discussing Tanner as both an American artist and a black artist:

For several years part of the art world of Paris has shown a steadily increasing interest in the work of Henry O. Tanner, a young American painter who has done much towards strengthening that higher position in contemporary art which was won for us by [John Singer] Sargent and [James A. M.] Whistler. In America, public recognition of Tanner's greatness has been somewhat retarded by the fact that he is a Negro and our publications have persistently spoken of him as the greatest Negro painter. It has pleased them to slight his art in the exploration of his race.¹⁰

The writer's own rather confused, if well-meaning tone—characteristic of its date—is illustrated by a further passage:

Booker T. Washington wrote of him: "Tanner is proud of his race. He feels deeply that as the representative of his people he is on trial to establish their right to be taken seriously in the world of art." But this classification of Tanner's work, while literally true, gives an erroneous impression. Although his paintings exhibit that full-blooded sense of rhythm and color which give a peculiar charm to the art productions of his race, Tanner's work is above all racial distinctions. He should no longer be classified as

the foremost negro painter, but rather as one of the greatest artists whom America has produced.¹¹

The notion of a "full-blooded sense of rhythm," in spite of the good intentions of this writer, can be interpreted as subtle racism.¹² Throughout his career, Tanner's art continued to be associated with his race, by black and white writers alike. The headline for a 1924 article in the *New York Times*, to cite one of many instances, read: "Tanner Exhibits Paintings: Negro Artist Shows Pictures at Grand Central Art Galleries."¹³

The complicated nature of Tanner's own thinking about race is partly conveyed in a long letter discovered by his biographer, Marcia M. Mathews. On May 25, 1914, Tanner wrote to a woman who planned to publish a long article on his work in *International Studio*:

Your good note and very appreciative article to hand. I have read it and, except [being] more than I deserve, it is exceptionally good. What you say is what I am trying to do and in a smaller way am doing (I hope). The only thing I take exception to is the inference in your last paragraph – and while I know it is the dictum in the States, it is not any more true for that reason. You say "In his personal life, Mr. T. has had many things to contend with. Ill-health, poverty, and race prejudice, always strong against a Negro." Now am I a Negro. Does not the 3/4 of English blood in my veins, which when it flowed in "pure" Anglo-Saxon men and which has done in the past effective and distinguished work in the U.S. – does this not count for anything? Does the 1/4 or 1/8 of "pure" Negro blood in my veins count for all? I believe it, the Negro blood counts and counts to my advantage – though it has caused me at times a life of great humiliation and sorrow but that it is the source of all my talents (if I have any) I do not believe, any more than I believe it all comes from my English ancestors. I suppose according to the distorted way things are seen in the States my blond curly-headed little boy would be "Negro." – True, this condition has driven me out of the country, but still my best friends I have are "white" Americans and while I cannot sing our National Hymn, "Land of Liberty," etc., still deep down in my heart I love it and am sometimes sad that I cannot live where my heart is.¹⁴

This letter was written when Tanner was deeply absorbed in painting scenes of North Africa and its people, whom his father had characterized as descended from Ham, the biblical progenitor of the black race, and we can take Tanner's emphatic statement, "I believe it, the Negro blood counts and counts to my advantage," as clear confirmation of his pride in his own roots.

Even during difficult later years Tanner continued to contribute to the NAACP, which valued the support sent from Paris. The famous author James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), then secretary of the Legal Defense Fund, wrote to Tanner on New Year's Eve, 1925: "It was especially gratifying to us to receive your contribution of twenty-five dollars to the Legal Defense Fund which we are establishing. I think that the published report of your contribution stimulated others to give."¹⁵

During the last decade of his life, when he was more than seventy years old, Tanner began to be characterized as aloof from other African-American artists living in Paris. This idea was expressed, probably for the first time, by the black printmaker Albert Smith (1896–1940), who wrote about Tanner in 1936 to the distinguished bibliophile Arthur Schomburg (1874–1938): "Personally I remember seeing him but

once since I have been in France. I understand through the chatty American secretary of the organization that he has a farm somewhere down the line and that with the communion that the earth gives you he finds the solitude that gives birth to his paintings. I must say that the American White artists hold him in deep respect."¹⁶

This personal view of Tanner seems to have evolved into such notions as those expressed by Cedric Dover in 1960 in *American Negro Art*:

American appreciation kept the "dean of American painters" comfortably aloof in Paris for forty-six years. He liked the role of an expatriate phenomenon in search of artistic truth; and coloured artists who sought his help were accordingly reminded that they could have it as artists, not as Negroes. So, above nationality and group loyalty, he spent the last twenty years of his life in increasing isolation and decline.¹⁷

The above contention is rendered off the mark by Tanner's unpublished letters among the Alexander papers at the University of Pennsylvania Archives, which show that the sense of racial identity and pride he had demonstrated over previous decades continued during his final years. He wrote to his niece, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, on March 23, 1936:

Yes, I met Marian Anderson not in Paris, but if I am not mistaken, in the person in your house. . . . However whether I have met her or not I am very glad she has a so beautiful voice and it is being recognized. However, "we are coming." Have you met Zora N. Hurston who has written a book that "they say" is fine – *Mules and Men* – I suppose you know of it – I am only judging by what I see in print and I very hope it is so.¹⁸

The artist himself provided an eloquent summation of the issue of race and his artistic career shortly before his death, when he wrote to his niece about an African-American he had encountered: "[He] has very probably never heard of me, as have not many hundreds and thousands of our people whom you might expect would know of my work, but it was not all for myself that I have tried in the measure of my ability to make a success of my life."¹⁹

In addition to the attention his work received from distinguished African-American writers, Tanner garnered ample recognition in the international art literature of his time from critics for such periodicals as *Revue de l'Art*, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, *International Studio*, *Fine Arts Journal*, and *Brush and Pencil* as well as in the pages of general magazines of wide circulation such as *Harper's Weekly*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Cosmopolitan*. Daily newspapers including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *New York Times*, and *Boston Evening Transcript* gave Tanner his due, and his career was the focus of articles in the *Negro History Bulletin* and W. E. B. Du Bois's *Crisis*.

A brief sampling demonstrates the esteem in which Tanner was held by critics. A writer in 1899 reviewed the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual: "Mr. Tanner continues to paint biblical scenes. . . . These paintings are naive, and yet they have strong sentiment, and a deal of honest fervor which leaves no place in one's judgment of them for anything but respect. Compared with these two paintings, Mr. Henri's two appear trivial."²⁰ The following year in *Cosmopolitan*, Vance Thompson discussed Tanner in an article on American artists in Paris: "A strange personage, this young mulatto – the product of Philadelphia and the Latin Quarter and Bethlehem – who is destined I like to think, to give the world a new conception . . . of the Bible."²¹

Not all the reviews were favorable, and Tanner took his share of criticism for being (depending upon the critic) too advanced or too conservative. Arthur Hoeber decried his work shown in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual of 1901:

The exhibition contains, too, much of an experimental nature of the latest developments in the art way, the extremists increasingly finding favor with the jury. Most of these, it must be confessed, are interesting rather for describing modern tendencies than for serious accomplishments, while a number are so freakish and so mannered as to count for little . . . for example, Henry O. Tanner . . .²²

Biographical accounts of Tanner began with Simmons's *Men of Mark*, and in 1909 the artist was invited to tell his own story in two issues of a periodical published by Doubleday, *World's Work*. By 1911, "Henry O. Tanner" appeared as an entry in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Later, brief biographies appeared in J. W. Cromwell's 1914 *The Negro in American History*²³ and Rilla Evelyn Jackman's *American Arts of 1928*.²⁴ After Tanner's death in 1937, biographical sketches continued to appear in such important studies as *The Negro in Art* by Alain L. Locke in 1940²⁵ and James A. Porter's *Modern Negro Art* of 1943.²⁶

Professor Locke's subsequent writing²⁷ on Tanner set the stage for future negative criticism of the artist.²⁸ Locke was disappointed because the artist did not use his international prestige to take the lead in the development of a specifically African-American school of art, which Locke hoped would be centered around genre scenes of people of color, in spite of the fact that Tanner's reputation was based on his treatment of biblical subjects. Milton M. James came to the artist's defense in an article of 1957 in the *Negro History Bulletin*:

Much can be said in support of Dr. Locke's point of view, however, it is the firm opinion of the writer that it is not the provenance of critics to say what a painter should paint. Painters, like other artists, must say what they have to say in their own way and through the mediums and motifs of their choice. The work of a painter must not be prescribed, for if it is, it will not be art but simply a slavish allegiance to the whims of theorists.²⁹

The first book-length scholarly study of Tanner appeared in 1960, an informative doctoral dissertation by Walter Augustus Simon.³⁰ His unpublished work places Tanner's life in the ethnographic and sociological context of his time, but discussion of Tanner's art is limited. In 1987, Naurice Frank Woods, Jr., also wrote a dissertation on the artist³¹ which considered recent literature and a cache of new letters and other documents. The standard biography of the artist, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist*, published by Marcia M. Mathews in 1969, drew upon letters and other documentation among the Tanner papers, which entered the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in 1968 and 1971; contemporary articles and reviews; and the reminiscences of the artist's son, Jesse Ossawa Tanner (1903-1985). Mathews's text remains a major source of information on Tanner's life.³²

Tanner's career was heralded both in his native America and in his adopted France, yet paradoxically, in the United States he tended to be seen as an expatriate absorbed into French culture, and in France he was always "citoyen américain." As a result, Tanner and other artists working abroad have tended to fall between the cracks in several books that deal with the art of his period. For example, Barbara Novak's 1969 seminal study, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century*,³³ did not include

the Francophile Tanner, it being beyond the author's scope to "find the native qualities and their transformation under the veneer of European modes" of Tanner and many of his colleagues.³⁴ As recent scholarship focuses on the more conservative Salon tradition of many American artists around the turn of the century, Tanner is increasingly recognized as an important figure in such books as Lois Marie Fink's *American Art at the Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons*, published in 1990.³⁵

The exhibition history of Tanner's work is closely related to his critical reception. The chronology in this volume reveals how widely his works were shown during his lifetime in cities ranging from San Francisco to St. Louis, Chicago to Philadelphia and New York, and Paris to Rome. After his death in 1937, there was a long hiatus until a memorial exhibition was held at the Philadelphia Art Alliance in 1945.³⁶ From this time until the late 1960s, euphemistically called an era of "racial unrest," Tanner and his art were largely forgotten by organizers of exhibitions. Then a flurry of shows devoted exclusively to Tanner appeared between 1967 and 1972. These projects ranged from a modest but interesting exhibition of 1969 held at Spelman College in Atlanta³⁷ to the regional show organized by the Hyde Collection of Glens Falls, New York, in 1972.³⁸ The major undertaking of this period was a nationally touring exhibition organized for 1969–70 by the Frederick Douglass Institute/Museum of African Art in collaboration with the National Collection of Fine Arts.³⁹

Following this new surge of interest, Tanner was included in a number of scholarly and often revisionist exhibitions such as *Turn of the Century America*, organized by Patricia Hills for the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1977;⁴⁰ *Themes in American Painting*, curated by J. Gray Sweeney for the Grand Rapids Art Museum in 1977;⁴¹ and *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting*, organized by Charles C. Eldridge in 1979 for New York University and the University of Kansas.⁴² The black artist was also included in ethnocentric exhibitions such as *Three Nineteenth Century Afro-American Artists*, 1980,⁴³ and *Americans in Brittany and Normandy 1860–1910* in 1982.⁴⁴ Nor was Tanner ignored in France, as is evidenced by the show held at Blérancourt in 1984, *La peinture Américaine dans les Collections du Louvre*.⁴⁵ The most recent exhibition in the "centric" vein to include Tanner, *Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth-Century America*, was organized by Lynda Roscoe Hartigan and toured the country from 1985 to 1988.⁴⁶

Yet a number of recent large survey exhibitions of nineteenth-century American art omitted Tanner. He was not seen in the major United States showing at Boston of *A New World: Masterpieces of American Painting 1760–1910*,⁴⁷ although his *Annunciation* (cat. no. 45) was added to the exhibition at Paris. Even though Tanner was heralded in print in 1913 as "the poet-painter of Palestine,"⁴⁸ he did not fit the mold carved by the organizers of *The Orientalists*, shown at the National Gallery of Art and the Royal Academy of Art in 1984.⁴⁹ There is no clear evidence that Tanner was deliberately excluded from large exhibitions in the mid 1970s and 1980s, but some omissions are surprising. *The Quest for Unity*,⁵⁰ which surveyed the arts in America between the World's Fairs of 1876 and 1893, included neither Tanner nor Edward Mitchell Bannister. Tanner was just emerging as an artist during these years, but at the Centennial Exposition of 1876, Bannister's *Under the Oaks* won a first-place bronze medal and certificate of award, and was considered "the best that an American artist could do."⁵¹

Representation in museum collections is as important to an artist's reputation as inclusion in major exhibitions. Almost from the outset of his career, Tanner's works were sought by public institutions as well as collectors. The French government bought two paintings – *The Resurrection of Lazarus* (cat. no. 38) in 1897 and *The Disciples at Emmaus* (see fig. 71) in 1906 – for the Musée du Luxembourg, the official French repository for masterpieces of contemporary art, selected by a highly competitive acquisition process.⁵² The support of American museums from coast to coast was demonstrated by such early purchases as *The Annunciation* (cat. no. 45) by the Wilstach Collection for the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Art in 1899, *Nicodemus Visiting Jesus* (cat. no. 47) by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1900, *Christ at the Home of Mary and Martha* (cat. no. 58) by the Carnegie Institute in 1905, and *Two Disciples at the Tomb* (cat. no. 59) by the Art Institute of Chicago in 1906. Major African-American colleges and universities also collected works by Tanner during his lifetime, beginning with the Hampton Institute, which received two paintings, including *The Banjo Lesson* (cat. no. 27), as a gift from Robert C. Ogden in 1894, and concluding with Howard University, which acquired an important picture by public subscription in 1937, shortly before the artist's death.

The largest group of Tanner's work now in the public domain – fifty paintings, watercolors, drawings, and etchings – was acquired by the Frederick Douglass Institute/Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C., through the energetic efforts of the museum's founder and director, Warren N. Robbins. This collection was transferred to the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, in 1983. Tanner's works are now on view in many museums, from Los Angeles to Paris, but more are ensconced in the storage racks and offices of others. The latter situation, coupled with the fact that many of the works reproduced and discussed in this catalogue have been lost to view for nearly eight decades, has impeded a thorough assessment of the artist's career.

Because of this state of affairs, Tanner is frequently recognized purely as a painter of religious themes based on the fame of such uncontested masterpieces as *The Resurrection of Lazarus* and *The Annunciation*. The recent wide distribution of a poster of *The Banjo Lesson* and the attention paid to *The Thankful Poor* (cat. no. 28), owing to its dramatic rediscovery and the celebrity of its subsequent owners, William H. and Camille O. Cosby, have created another, different image of the artist as a painter of African-American genre. Tanner's full range, including Oriental subjects based on life in North Africa and the Near East, has been more accurately indicated in recent exhibitions such as *Sharing Traditions*. Critics, art historians, and curators do well to avoid pigeonholing Tanner according to the stylistic "isms" used to describe art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will become apparent from this catalogue that, without becoming eclectic, the artist put to work several modes for his own creative goals.

Almost from the beginning, Tanner found an impressive number of private patrons and collectors who purchased his work and promoted his career. Museum collections were enriched by paintings presented as gifts by many of these benefactors. The earliest example is Robert C. Ogden's gift of the famous *Banjo Lesson* to the Hampton Institute in 1894. In 1922 the California collectors Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison pledged Tanner's late version of *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (cat. no. 87) to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Atherton Curtis, the Francophile American

print collector and author of several books on prints,⁵³ presented a version of *Sodom and Gomorrah* (see cat. no. 98) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1924. J. J. Haverty of Atlanta acquired several works from Tanner in the late 1920s, paving the way for important gifts to the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

But this widespread patronage also had a paradoxical aspect. As early as 1899, Tanner's supporters were concerned that his paintings were not reaching the black community, an audience of great importance to him. Booker T. Washington wrote in the *Washington Colored American*:

An earnest effort was made in Philadelphia and elsewhere sometime ago to get our people to contribute sufficient money to purchase *The Bagpipe Lesson*, an early work of the artist, but with little or no practical success. . . . This first work of Mr. Tanner's was finally, I believe, purchased by some Philadelphia white people. Few of the race are able individually to purchase Mr. Tanner's original paintings, but hundreds are able to secure the photographs of these productions. . . . This is the practical test in a large measure of our gratitude to and admiration for Mr. Tanner. . . . Will we help to do this or shall we leave it all to others to do?⁵⁴

Some twenty-five years after Washington's plea, W. E. B. Du Bois returned to the same subject in the *Crisis*: "Once in Paris, years ago, Henry Tanner, the great artist, voiced a complaint — a little complaint, hesitatingly and diffidently expressed. 'Do you know, I never have been able to sell one of my pictures to a colored man.'"⁵⁵ Du Bois's response to Tanner's understated but moving remark is still relevant: "I mumbled vague apologies: We are poor ('We own 100,000 automobiles,' said my soul); We have not yet come to appreciate art ('We are the only American artists,' murmured my mind); We are not yet sufficiently familiar with your work ('Tanner is a perennial essay subject,' remarked my sinking heart): In fact it was our muddling carelessness. Who of us buys even books, much less pictures?"⁵⁶

By 1924 several African-American institutions had commissioned work from Tanner, and Du Bois did have good news to report about private black patronage of his art:

But the ice is broken. At the last New York exhibit of Tanner's marvelous canvasses [held at Grand Central Art Galleries in 1923] . . . John E. Nail of New York City paid a price that ran into four figures for two paintings worth a journey of a thousand miles to see. And another young colored man, Dr. Godfrey Nurse, bought a third; and we learn that two or three Negroes are actually considering similar purchases. These are sure signs of civilization.⁵⁷

The mention of "prices paid" raises the question of what level of income the sale of pictures provided Tanner during his lifetime. In 1897 the French government paid him 1800 francs, or roughly \$346, for *The Resurrection of Lazarus* while a work of comparable size, *Paysage d'Automne* by the French artist Eugène Tanguy (1830–99), fetched 600 francs the same year.⁵⁸ Rodman Wanamaker paid \$1750 for *The Annunciation* in 1899, and the Pennsylvania Academy bought *Nicodemus Visiting Jesus* for \$1500 in 1900. Between 1901 and 1902, the *Ladies Home Journal* commissioned four paintings to illustrate a series on the mothers of the Bible (cat. nos. 51–53). Customs declarations valued these works at 7500 francs each, and their frames at an additional 10 francs,⁵⁹ a total of just under \$6000.⁶⁰ Several years later, in 1909,

Tanner set the price of his enormous picture *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* (see fig. 50) at \$15,000 because it was "the result of three years work."⁶¹ Dr. I. M. Cline of New Orleans paid \$600 for *The Good Shepherd* (cat. no. 88) in 1918,⁶² and during the economic boom of the middle 1920s, a version of the Nicodemus theme was commissioned by the Richard Humphreys Foundation through the Cheyney Training School for Teachers for the substantial sum of \$3000.⁶³ Not surprisingly, in the years of the Great Depression, prices for Tanner's pictures plummeted. He wrote in 1935 to a cousin, Maudelle Bousfield, in Chicago:

To buy a picture you come in a very good time. I have two small pictures, a *Hiding of Moses* and *The Flight into Egypt*, size about 24 × 28 inches, for which in ordinary times I would receive from \$350 to \$400 and which I believe are very good examples of my work. I would take two hundred. . . . I am making it especially easy not only on account of the times but because I should like some of my family to have some of my work. On account of the hard times all over the world even some of the most successful artists have temporarily reduced their prices. This is my case.⁶⁴

The vast majority of Tanner's sales occurred in America, and his prices can be compared to those asked by his teacher Thomas Eakins. Early in 1897 the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts bought *The Cello Player* for Eakins's asking price of \$500.⁶⁵ Tanner asked \$1750 for *Nicodemus* and received \$1500; he paid a commission of about 10 percent to his art dealers and others who aided his sales.⁶⁶ Eakins's biographer Lloyd Goodrich has pointed out that Eakins by 1914 was pricing his works anywhere from \$2000 to \$10,000,⁶⁷ but "none of these works shown at these increased prices found buyers," and Eakins returned to more modest rates ranging from \$500 to \$2500.⁶⁸ Tanner's prices were consistent with and even exceeded those paid to his erstwhile teacher. Nevertheless, he often complained about a lack of sales.⁶⁹

Tanner appears to have made a decent living from his artistic production. During the first years at Paris in 1891 to 1893, he "kept a strict account of all money spent, and it amounted to \$365, including tuition and every expense."⁷⁰ A decade later, his earnings allowed for the purchase of a long, one-story peasant house called *Les Charmes* at Trépied, near Etaples, in the Pas-de-Calais region of northwest France. Tanner spent summers there while maintaining an apartment in Paris and a studio at 51 boulevard Saint-Jacques near the Latin Quarter.⁷¹ However, assistance from patrons and admirers, including Rodman Wanamaker, who subsidized two trips to the Near East, and Tanner's good friend Atherton Curtis, who helped with educational expenses for his son, Jesse, must have been most welcome. Tanner was also able to afford frequent travel during most of his life. In 1921 he sold *Les Charmes* and built a new house at Trépied,⁷² but in the last decade of his life, the African-American artist found that his straitened circumstances were not so different from that of so many others during the Great Depression.

The attention paid to Henry Ossawa Tanner by the art world during his lifetime also included many awards. Beginning with an honorable mention in 1896 from the Paris Salon, he received some form of important official recognition every decade of his life. Among the awards of the first ten years of this century was the Art Institute of Chicago's Harris Prize for "the most impressive and distinguished work of

art of the season,"⁷³ awarded to *Two Disciples at the Tomb* (cat. no. 59) in 1906. Even more important that year was the second-class medal awarded at the Paris Salon to *The Disciples at Emmaus*, the highest recognition Tanner could receive from the jury since the first-class gold medal was reserved for French artists. With the 1906 medal came the designation of *hors concours*, which allowed Tanner to enter future Salon exhibitions without submitting works to the jury. In 1915 the African-American artist was awarded a gold medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition held at San Francisco. The crowning point of Tanner's career came in 1923 when the French government presented him with the prestigious Cross of the Legion of Honor.⁷⁴

After Tanner's death in 1937, recognition ranged from the issuance of a commemorative stamp by the U.S. Postal Service in 1973 to the designation of a professorship in his name at Morgan State University in Baltimore.⁷⁵

Considering Tanner's widespread fame at the turn of the century, the absence of any evidence indicating his involvement with other famous emigré artists is most curious. From 1934 Tanner lived at 43 rue de Fleurus, near Gertrude Stein's residence at no. 27, where an "improbable mixture of types and nationalities" gathered,⁷⁶ and artists such as Matisse and Picasso often dined. There is no intention to imply that racism pervaded the expatriate community in Paris, yet we cannot say with certainty that Tanner met any of these luminaries. His contact with French artists in the avant-garde circle of Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) is discussed below, but the existing literature does not connect him with such Franco-American artists as his nearly exact contemporary Elizabeth Nourse (1859–1938);⁷⁷ his fellow Philadelphian and student at the Académie Julian, Aston Knight (1873–1948);⁷⁸ nor the expatriate Philadelphian and well-known Impressionist, Mary Cassatt (1845–1926).

But there is no question that Tanner was esteemed by his fellow artists. Their appreciation of his talent started well before he received substantial public recognition in 1897. His teacher at the Académie Julian, Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant (1845–1902), inscribed a picture to Tanner: "To my pupil Tanner from his teacher and friend, ever confident of the success of his accomplishments."⁷⁹ Benjamin-Constant's belief in Tanner's future success was emphasized when the older artist sought him out in Philadelphia during a trip to America in 1894.⁸⁰ Thomas Eakins painted Tanner's portrait in 1902, surely a sign of the two artists' warm relationship. Their friendship must have begun in the 1880s during Tanner's student years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Correspondence during the late 1890s from Harrison S. Morris, managing director of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, sheds light on the artist's reputation among colleagues in the United States. Morris wrote to Tanner on April 16, 1897: "The picture *Daniel* was very much admired while it was in our exhibition and, especially, commended by Mr. William M.[erritt] Chase who spoke of it in a public address to his students and privately praised it very often."⁸¹ Morris himself declared the next year: "In offering my sincerest congratulations on your continued success I feel naturally proud in being your fellow countryman."⁸² In the same letter the Academy director requested Tanner to annotate Paris Salon catalogues with his comments on the best American pictures. Then, during the early summer, he referred to the reception of Tanner's *Annunciation* at the Salon, writing that the painter Walter Gay (1856–1937) "tells me that not since Sargent's early triumphs has there been

anything like it."⁸³ Gay was to maintain his high opinion for forty years, later remarking, "Tanner is a great painter."⁸⁴

The sculptor Hermon MacNeil, a longtime friend who shared a studio with Tanner in the 1890s, touched on the high regard and affection in which fellow artists held Tanner. MacNeil wrote to him on December 9, 1930: "Just a little reminder that we are occasionally thinking of you. . . . Last evening at the Arts Club Roundtable dinner I was sitting beside Roy Brown chatting about your good self. . . . Various of your friends here often speak of you in a more choice way. I will not stop to make you blush at this time. I am simply sending you the most pleasant greetings that I am able to wish for a pleasant holiday."⁸⁵

The esteem in which Tanner was held by his fellow artists was not limited to views expressed in the intimacy of letters. He was elected by his peers as an associate member of the National Academy of Design in New York in 1909 and as a full academician in 1927. Between these years, he was invited to serve on the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts jury for the selection of its annual exhibition.⁸⁶ By the summer of 1914, Tanner was elected by his colleagues as President of the Société Artistique de Picardie. The artist and critic Clara T. MacChesney delineated Tanner's status among his colleagues: "H. O. Tanner . . . has long been a member of the Trépied colony and is president of the Art Society of Picardy, Le Touquet. His delightful home is the centre of the colony, and the artist or student from Etaples, of Le Touquet, Paris-Plage, is always sure of a welcome."⁸⁷

Tanner's "delightful" colony home was open to young African-American artists seeking advice and encouragement. Hale Woodruff (1900–80), a black artist from Cairo, Illinois, visited Trépied in 1928; Tanner engaged him in a discussion about art in general and viewed his portfolio.⁸⁸ Woodruff recalled: "It was a brisk day in the late winter, or early spring of 1928, when I took the train from Paris bound for that small town. . . . I was soon to discover that I was on my way to meet a remarkable man of profound intelligence and scholarship, and, as I was also to learn, a man of personal dignity and elegance."⁸⁹

Sudden changes in the world economy and radical shifts in modern aesthetics would force Tanner into relative obscurity by the end of his life. But his art, and his generous and spiritual nature, remained a major source of inspiration for younger painters. The renowned African-American artist Romare Bearden (1914–88) found the quality of self-exploration apparent in Tanner's work to be "vital and transcendent."⁹⁰ The strength and resonance of Tanner's inner vision, which remained constant throughout his career, ultimately account for the lasting relevance of his art.

DEWEY F. MOSBY



The Tanner family, c. 1890. *Left to right:* Isabella, Halle, her daughter Sadie, Henry, Bishop Tanner, Carlton, Mrs. Tanner, Bertha, Sarah, and Mary.

THE TANNER FAMILY:

A GRANDNIECE'S CHRONICLE

On a cold March evening in 1859 some of the citizenry of Pittsburgh gathered to hear a lecture in the Masonic Hall. Benjamin Tucker Tanner, a twenty-three-year-old black man of medium height and stocky build, was among those in attendance. As Tanner was taking his seat, U.S. Deputy Marshal Bernard Dougherty stepped forward and told him he could not sit in what was designated a white section. When young Tanner refused to move to the black section, Dougherty threw him out of the hall.

For many the matter would have ended there, but Tanner was indignant over his treatment. He hired a lawyer and sued the deputy marshal for assault and battery. A local newspaper supported Tanner's contention, calling him a "young colored man of good character, an intelligent, industrious, sober, young man . . . a native of this city; his father was a native of this city, and his grandfather lived here in 1792."¹ The paper noted that "long before Mr. Dougherty's parents had thought of his existence in the Green Isle, Tanner's father was a citizen of the country."² Court records of the lawsuit were destroyed by fire at the turn of the century, so we don't know its outcome. But Benjamin Tanner's outrage tells us a lot about his character: he was a man of dignity who challenged any form of racial abuse or denial.

The Tanners can trace their origins in the city of Pittsburgh to the eighteenth century through Benjamin Tanner's father (Hugh S. Tanner), grandfather (Herman Tanner), and great-grandfather (Richard Tanner), but other details of the family's history are sketchy.³ Benjamin Tucker Tanner was born on Christmas Day in 1835. Reared in a deeply religious and socially committed family, Benjamin at an early age witnessed his parents' activism and resolve regarding problems of race and class. Hugh, a laborer, and Isabella Tanner were determined that their twelve children would acquire the best possible education. We do not know if his siblings were as fortunate, but Benjamin received a formal education, attending Avery College, a school founded for African-American students by a white abolitionist, Charles Avery, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.⁴ To help pay his tuition, Benjamin worked as a barber. It was perhaps at Avery College that Benjamin met his future wife, Sarah Elizabeth Miller, who was also a student there.

Sarah Miller's origins are not clear. Marcia Mathews, the biographer of Henry Ossawa Tanner, states that Charles Miller, Sarah's father, left Winchester, Virginia, in



Benjamin Tucker Tanner, c. 1870.



Sarah Elizabeth Miller Tanner, 1892.

1846 "for the free state of Pennsylvania, taking his family with him in an oxcart."⁵ The family account, as told to me by my mother, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, a granddaughter of Benjamin and Sarah Tanner, reports that Sarah, born on May 18, 1840, was one of eleven children born to a slave named Elizabeth. Six of Elizabeth's children were fathered by Charles Miller, a freedman who wanted to marry her; five of her children were fathered by the slave master who owned the plantation. Each time Miller saved enough money to purchase Elizabeth's freedom, the slave master increased the price. Finally Elizabeth contacted agents of the Underground Railroad. With their assistance, she put Sarah and her other children in one of the master's double-team wagons, stocked it with food, and sent them away at midnight, never to see them again. When the children arrived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, they were met by members of the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society. Shortly thereafter, the children were divided among various families. Sarah was sent to Pittsburgh.⁶

With his friends and associates, Benjamin Tanner was often stoic, circumspect, and austere. But when he was with Sarah, whom he affectionately called Sadee, he was talkative, relaxed, and attentive. The two were soon engaged. On June 5, 1857, Benjamin wrote to Sarah professing his love and asking reassurance that if they faced a "maelstrom," she would not turn to another. He signed his letter, "Yours now and forever and no one else."⁷ They were married on August 19, 1858, in Pittsburgh.

Upon graduation from Avery College, Benjamin enrolled at Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, where his three years of study in a classical curriculum included Greek and Latin. In 1858 he was licensed to preach, and two years later he was ordained into the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Founded

in 1816 in Philadelphia by Richard Allen, the A.M.E. Church was, according to W. E. B. Du Bois, "the greatest Negro organization in the world."⁸

Henry, the Tanner's first child, was born June 21, 1859. His middle name, Ossawa, was derived from Osawatomie, the town in Kansas where in 1856 the white militant abolitionist John Brown launched his antislavery campaign. John Brown's heroic struggle symbolized for black people their quest for freedom. Thus, for Benjamin and Sarah, Ossawa embodied the hope for emancipation. A few months after Henry's birth, Brown was hanged for leading an antislavery raid on Harpers Ferry.

The Reverend Tanner was ever mindful of the fragility of life. Several children had died who were about the same age as Henry, including his sister Charlotte's daughter Florence, who was just eight months old. Writing in his daybook on January 21, 1860, Tanner said: "Whether the preservation of Henry's life and health will prove a blessing the Lord only knows. For how can I, a mortal man look into the future and see his life, and see whether he will love God and man, or whether he will be an enemy of both. The Lord give us, O give us wisdom to bring him up if at all in the understanding and admonishment of God."⁹

Soon after Henry's first birthday, Tanner was assigned by Bishop Daniel A. Payne of the A.M.E. Church to be a "supply and interim minister" at the prestigious Fifteenth Street Colored Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. When Tanner arrived in the city to assume his duties, free blacks comprised 15 percent of Washington's 75,000 residents. The slave population numbered 3,100. Although blacks were subject to the oppressive Black Codes, which restricted their civil rights and severely limited the areas in which they could purchase or rent property, they were still able to form a closely knit and cohesive community.

As the Reverend Tanner pastored his flock, the political climate in Washington grew ominous; a decade of mounting passion over the issue of slavery was tearing the Union apart. Presidential elections were on the horizon. Although neither black nor white Washingtonians could vote in the election, enthusiasm was high. Everyone knew that the man elected president would decide the fate of the nation. On November 7, 1860, Benjamin Tanner wrote in his daybook: "Abraham Lincoln is elected President of the U.S. As far as I am judge it is for good great excitement. So much so that I was advised not to have church."¹⁰

One week after the election, Washington's real estate market collapsed, and a few days later the local banks suspended specie payments. Although the economy was unstable, on November 19, Tanner sent a check for sixteen dollars to Sarah, who had remained in Pittsburgh, to help pay her passage to Baltimore. Nine days later he met her and young Henry there. After breakfast and a brief rest at the home of "Bro. Read's," a member of his congregation, he and his family took the train to Washington. The brief trip was marred by what Tanner referred to as "American prejudice," the racial discrimination that placed black travelers at the mercy of white passengers and indifferent conductors.

During his eighteen months as minister in Washington, the Reverend Tanner spent long hours reading and preparing his sermons. Early in his career he had established a pattern of hard work, diligence, and a meticulous concern for detail. As an extension of his ministerial duties, in 1861 he founded the Sabbath School for Freedmen in the U.S. Navy Yard. A year later Tanner established the Alexander

Mission for Freedmen on E Street in Washington, the first such mission during the Civil War. In rapid succession he became the pastor at Georgetown in 1863; at Frederick, Maryland, in 1864, and at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baltimore in 1866.

Tanner wrote on January 10, 1866: "I was in my study this morning at six, having been kept up late last night. 5 o'clock is the time usually for me to be at my studies. This morning I devoted as usual to my languages, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew."¹¹ In another daybook entry on January 26, he wrote of how much time his studies consumed and how they interfered with his responsibilities as a pastor: "Ten hours of the 24 are spent in my study. I have a burning desire to feel as I know a Priest ought to feel: but, my studies, they consume me, and I am compelled to it."¹²

Tanner was writing a manuscript on the A.M.E. Church, and it was probably the demands of this important task, coupled with his waning interest in the ministry, that caused him to leave the pulpit of Bethel Church in 1866 and return to Frederick, Maryland, for a new post as principal of the A.M.E. Conference School of Freedmen. The Freedman's Society also secured his services in organizing a common school. While Tanner moved from one assignment to another, his family grew: Halle was born in 1864; Mary Louise, my grandmother, in 1865; and Isabella in 1867.

By this time Tanner had completed his first book, *An Apology for African Methodism* (1867). An impressive volume of 468 pages, it presented one of the first intellectual and theological accounts of the schisms between the black and white Methodist churches. Tanner also briefly outlined the history of the A.M.E. Church, and the confluence of its African heritage, the Methodist form of worship, and the Episcopal hierarchical structure.

A critical success, Tanner's book was enthusiastically received by the religious community. Within the A.M.E. Church he was highly respected and viewed as a brilliant ecclesiastical scholar. It was not surprising therefore that the general conference of the A.M.E. Church, meeting in 1868, elected Tanner to be editor of the denomination's widely influential newspaper, the *Christian Recorder*, a post he would hold until 1884. The Tanners moved to Philadelphia and settled in a home on Third and Pine streets, just a few blocks from the building that housed the offices of the newspaper.¹³

With Tanner as editor, the *Christian Recorder* now turned from a solely religious outlook to encompass secular topics. Through his editorials Tanner addressed the major issues facing African-Americans in the nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1880 the black population in Philadelphia had increased 68 percent. Blacks were attracted to the city because of jobs but found themselves in direct competition with European immigrants. In the pages of the *Christian Recorder* Tanner followed the changing demographics of the community and railed against the loss of jobs by African-Americans to the new arrivals from Europe. These were mostly jobs "in service," and although Tanner envisioned more skilled jobs for blacks, he was "realistic when these may be the only jobs we can get to feed our families."¹⁴ A series of articles he wrote on the immigration of blacks to Africa revived an old controversy. Tanner opposed emigration, believing that blacks with training and education were needed in America to help build a strong middle class. A contrary view was taken by an eminent black nationalist, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner of the A.M.E. Church. The heated exchange between the two thinkers soon expanded to include prominent black spokesmen such as Frederick Douglass (1817-95), who generally subscribed to

Tanner's position. Most African-Americans opposed emigration, concluding that after suffering the ravages of slavery, black people in America would not be aided by sending their most talented professionals to live and work in Africa.¹⁵

Tanner's ecclesiastical and secular writings won him the recognition of his undergraduate school, Avery College, from which he was given an honorary M.A. degree in 1870. That same year another son, Carlton, was born to the Tanner family, which by now had grown too large for their little house on Pine Street. In 1872 Tanner purchased an eight-room house at 2908 Diamond Street in North Philadelphia. Two more daughters followed – Sarah Elizabeth, born in 1873, and the last child, Bertha, in 1878. (Two other children did not survive infancy.) Although she was busy caring for her family, Sarah Tanner found time to organize the Mite Missionary Society of the A.M.E. Church, one of the earliest societies of black women in America.

The Tanner home soon became a place for leading black and white clergymen to participate in learned discussions on theological and secular matters. Noted black historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson deemed the home “the center of the black intellectual community in Philadelphia,”¹⁶ and within this stimulating atmosphere the seven Tanner children were encouraged to succeed. Later, during the early years of Henry's artistic career, Reverend Tanner's professional circle provided his son with ready encouragement and support. He spent one winter sketching and painting in Florida as the guest of Bishop Daniel A. Payne, his father's friend and superior in the A.M.E. Church. Henry benefited also from his association with Bishop Joseph Crane Hartzell, another of his father's colleagues. Bishop Hartzell and his wife, whom Henry met in Atlanta, helped him secure a teaching position in 1889 at Clark University, and later sponsored the first exhibition of his works at the Methodist Book Concern in Cincinnati.

My mother, who lived with her grandparents as a small child, recalled some of the more quotidian details of the Diamond Street household:

Food was never considered a matter on which one should spend precious hours of his life. I can so well remember that we children were not even allowed to discuss what we enjoyed eating. The attitude of our grandparents was that food was to be eaten only to keep the body well, so that one could work, not give pleasure. My maternal grandfather (Benjamin T. Tanner), a prolific writer, would eat only fruit, cereal, tea and/or milk in the morning. Frequently, we children would have to wait until almost 2:00 p.m. for the noon day meal, because Grandpa was writing in his study and would not stop, saying that if he stopped to eat, his mind would become dull because the blood previously supplying his mind would be used to help the stomach take care of the food.¹⁷

Along with these daily measures of discipline, the Reverend Tanner also showed a loving side. To celebrate Halle's eighteenth birthday, he wrote a poem joyfully recounting the progress of her years, and encouraging her to “be, my daughter, like the river/be an earnest, happy liver.”¹⁸

In 1881 the Reverend Tanner went to London to attend the Ecumenical Conference of Methodism. His visit lasted three months and was chronicled in the *Christian Recorder*. Perhaps the most poignant account was written on Tanner's return to Philadelphia, when he contrasted his life in Europe with that in America. In words laced with anger, he spoke of being denied service with whites in a restaurant and of being unable to sit in a railroad car next to white women or children in the



Carlton Tanner, c. 1890.

United States, but that while in Europe he had been unencumbered in his travels. Tanner mused about a time in the future, perhaps "fifty years hence and caste will be dead. The grandchildren of the present generation will experience little, if any, of it [discrimination]."19

Henry too experienced the hardships of racism, especially when white art teachers in Philadelphia refused to take him as a pupil. He found support for his ambitions from men such as Jacob C. White, principal of the Roberts Vaux Grammar School and an important leader in the local African-American community, as well as from his father and the pages of the *Christian Recorder*. In the early 1870s, Henry might have read there about the travels and studies of the artist Edmonia Lewis, whose sculpture Tanner would see in 1876 at the Centennial Exposition, along with paintings by the black artist Edward Mitchell Bannister. Benjamin Tanner, writing in the *Christian Recorder*, had expressed his concern that black artists be included in the exposition.

The Reverend Tanner completed a major book on African Methodist Episcopal Church history in 1884 and later that year launched the *A.M.E. Church Review*. One of the first church magazines published by blacks for a national audience, the *Review* provided its readers with a rich variety of articles on social and political issues of particular interest to African-Americans. William J. Simmons described the *Review* as "one of the most scholarly productions of the age, and its list of writers includes all classes of thinkers and writers of all denominations, male and female."20

Nearly all of Benjamin Tanner's time was devoted to editing the *Review*. His oldest daughter, Halle, worked in the magazine's office, but her mind was not always on her work. She had fallen in love with a tall handsome man, Charles E. Dillon, from Trenton, New Jersey, and following a brief courtship they were married in the Tanner home in June 1886. The bride was elegant and beautiful with "many richly dressed ladies in attendance."21 A year later Halle and Charles became the proud parents of a little girl, Sadie. The first grandchild of the Reverend and Mrs. Tanner, Sadie was naturally showered with affection. But tragedy struck this young family when Charles Dillon died. Their joy and tranquillity shattered, Halle and her daughter moved into the house on Diamond Street.

After several months, Halle set aside her grief, and at twenty-four she entered medical school at Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. Women's Medical was established in 1850 because no orthodox medical school in the city would train female students. The school graduated its first black student, Rebecca Cole, in 1867, but only a few blacks graduated in the interim; Halle was the only black student in her class.

In 1888, Benjamin Tanner was elected a bishop of the A.M.E. Church. He could no longer act as editor of the *Review*, but his appointment did not curtail his output of scholarly publications, and he continued to be an ardent evangelist for his emancipated people.

Before Henry left Philadelphia in 1891 to study art in Europe, the Tanners posed for a family portrait. Benjamin Tanner is seated in the center of the photograph

in a high-back, brocaded chair, his eyes fixed. His wife is to his left; the seven Tanner children and the first grandchild, each elegantly dressed and strikingly handsome, surround the bishop and Sarah.

In 1891 Halle completed her three-year course of study at Women's Medical. Before graduation, she had written to Booker T. Washington, founder and president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, asking him to consider her for a job at the school. Washington offered her the position of resident physician, informing Halle that the job paid "\$600 a year with board for twelve months' work, including one month of vacation."²² Moreover, he added, "This is with the understanding that you would teach two classes a day, if necessary, and take full charge of the health department. We should expect you to compound your own medicine as far as possible."²³ Halle and Washington met in Philadelphia in the spring of that year, and he assured her and her father that the institute would be the right place for a young black woman doctor to begin her career.

At the beginning of August, Halle arrived in Tuskegee, Alabama, a small town of three thousand, half of whom were black. This was a long way from her cosmopolitan hometown. Halle must have been viewed by the students and residents not only with curiosity but with pride, since she was the first woman physician most had ever met. After becoming acquainted with the facilities, Halle left several days later for Montgomery to prepare for the medical board tests. Washington had arranged for her to study for the strenuous exams with Dr. Cornelius Nathaniel Dorsette, who practiced medicine in Montgomery and was the first black physician to pass the Alabama medical boards.²⁴

In a letter to Washington, Bishop Tanner expressed his concern for Halle's success: "Of course, we are all anxious about the Doctor. Not that we have any misgivings as to her ability to pass any reasonable and just examination. But we know that both her sex and her color will be against her."²⁵ Washington accompanied Halle to the capitol building on the first day of the exhausting, difficult exams, which lasted ten days. But Halle passed, with a score of 78.8,²⁶ to become the first woman ever admitted on examination to practice medicine in Alabama.²⁷

From 1891 to 1894 Dr. Dillon served as resident physician of Tuskegee Institute. Attempting to address social inequities, she charged her private patients only twenty-five cents for medicines — many of which she prepared — and ten cents for a house call.²⁸ White physicians charged two dollars per mile for a visit, with an additional fee for medicine.²⁹ During her tenure at Tuskegee Dr. Dillon also established the Lafayette Dispensary and Nurses' Training School. In 1894 she married the Reverend John Quincy Johnson, and they eventually moved to Nashville. Halle bore three sons and died in childbirth in April 1901.

While Halle was establishing herself as a doctor, Henry was maturing as an artist and traveling between Europe and the United States, with occasional side trips to the Middle East. These productive times for the young artist were given yet another exciting dimension when he met Jessie Macauley Olssen in 1898. A white woman of



Halle Tanner, c. 1890.



Henry Ossawa Tanner, c. 1900.



Jessie Tanner, c. 1905.

Swedish-Scottish ancestry, Jessie was born in San Francisco, where her father was in the shipbuilding industry. She was a tall, attractive woman whose sparkling, ebullient personality was a pleasant complement to Henry's quiet reserve. Henry, however, balked at marriage, but while on his second trip to the Near East in 1898–99, he received a telegram from Jessie which read: "Come to me."³⁰ If Henry had any uncertainty about marrying a white woman, it vanished, and on December 14, 1899, they were married in London. Jessie's sister, Elna, and a Dutch friend, Gerhooft C. Mars, served as witnesses. Their parents were unable to attend the wedding but sent their blessings. About four years later, on September 25, 1903, the couple's son and only child, Jesse Ossawa Tanner, was born in New York City.

Henry was increasingly acclaimed as an artist, and his rising celebrity caused aspiring artists to seek his assistance and endorsement. During the fall of 1899 the niece of a Philadelphia friend came to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The young artist, Meta Vaux Warrick (Fuller), became famous for her remarkable sculpture. Henry had planned to meet Warrick at the station, but for some unknown reason he did not appear. She took a taxi to the American Girls Club, but when the resident director saw Warrick, she exclaimed: "Why didn't you tell me you were not a white girl?" Henry was contacted, and he immediately secured her a room at a small hotel. Warrick was the first of many black artists who called on Henry for advice, support, and fellowship – which he gave based on ability, not race.

While Henry was winning prizes and selling paintings, his father was as active as ever. In September 1901 he was in London as a delegate to the Third Ecumenical Conference on Methodism, where he read a paper on the "Elements of Pulpit

Effectiveness." Henry and Jessie visited London during the bishop's stay, and they found him strong and vigorous at sixty-six years of age.

The rest of the family was settling down. Mary Louise, Henry's favorite sister and my grandmother, who was thirty-five years old at the turn of the century, was married to Aaron Mossell, a young lawyer from Lockport, New York. Mossell was the first black person to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He would later abandon Mary and his three children and move to Cardiff, Wales. One of Mary's daughters, Sadie, my mother, was distinguished in her own right, becoming the second black woman in America to receive a Ph.D., and the first in economics. She was not only the first black woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School but the first to pass the bar and practice in the state. She married Raymond Pace Alexander, with whom she established a lifelong law practice. My father, an eminent jurist, was also an outstanding city councilman in Philadelphia.

Carlton Tanner, who had attended theological school, was by this time in South Africa working as managing editor of the *South African Christian Recorder*. Subsequently he would write a number of books on the history and polity of his church. He married Frances Stanford, a trained nurse, who was unstinting in her support of Carlton's ministry. Isabella Tanner had married the Reverend Noah Temple and was living in Pittsburgh. Bertha Tanner had married Samuel Patterson Stafford, a member of the first four-year class in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and had settled in St. Louis. Sarah Elizabeth married Lewis B. Moore, the first black to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Later, at Howard University, Dr. Moore was instrumental in organizing the Teacher's College. The Moores' son, Lewis, was educated at Storer College and Bates, and received a law degree from Temple University. A daughter, Sarah Moore Pride, taught school in New York.

Given Henry's growing stature and the bishop's demanding schedule, it is little wonder that several years passed before the entire family assembled once again. They finally gathered in the winter of 1908 to celebrate Bishop and Mrs. Tanner's fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was a festive occasion, although no doubt the race riots that had marred the summer were discussed. Those relatives who could not attend sent warm regards to the patriarch and his wife, including the bishop's three living sisters, Nancy, Mary, and Charlotte.

Nancy was married to the Reverend Lewis Woodson, a minister in the A.M.E. Church who had been a teacher at a popular school for African-Americans in Pittsburgh before the Civil War. Mrs. Woodson had eleven children, most of whom rose to distinction. Mary, the bishop's youngest sister, was also married to a minister, the Reverend John Russell. Mary and her husband were committed to religious and educational work, and all of their children attended college.

The bishop's niece, Arrena, was married to Charles H. Brown, a teacher in the St. Louis public schools for more than half a century. Of her four children, Maudelle



Jessie Tanner holding Jesse,
October–November 1903.

would achieve the most acclaim. She married Midian O. Bousfield, who was a colonel in the army during the Second World War. She graduated from the Mendelssohn Conservatory of Music, and after teaching at several schools in Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore, Maudelle served as dean of girls at Phillips High School in Chicago and later became the first person of her race to be named principal of a Chicago public school. Maudelle earned a national reputation, particularly for her exemplary work with the large number of black migrants who flowed into Chicago from the South. She demonstrated to many skeptical white educators that a black woman could function successfully not only as a teacher but also as a supervisor.

Bishop Tanner died on January 15, 1923, several months before the family received the good news that Henry had been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Henry considered his citation by the French government to be the greatest honor of his illustrious career. Another joyous family event took place that year when the bishop's nephew, Benjamin T. Johnson, Halle's son by the Reverend J. Q. Johnson, married Mary Parker of Boston.

Two years after his father's death, however, Henry faced another loss: his beloved Jessie died on September 8, 1925. His son, Jesse, was his only consolation, but he was completing his education at the London School of Mines. Within a year the two were reunited as Jesse returned home to care for his father and to recover from his own mental exhaustion. Henry's concern about his son's health forced him to set aside his own despair. Soon he was painting with greater regularity and anticipating a round of New York exhibitions. He would continue working, albeit with decreasing vigor, until his death on May 25, 1937.

Henry Ossawa Tanner was a complex man who was unwilling to compromise his integrity or his humanism. In the same way that his family fought for civil rights in America, Henry waged a determined struggle against the social and historical factors that sought to limit his artistic expression. His residency in Europe was not a retreat from the political issues facing his people; he needed this distance to paint freely the stories he had heard at his father's knee and in his father's churches. "In his religious painting," the late artist Romare Bearden commented, "Tanner tells us much of what he thinks about the world and of man's place in it. This kind of self-exploration when integrated by a personality of real proportion can be both vital and transcendent."³¹

Bearden's perception was echoed and extended by my cousin, Jesse O. Tanner. He recalled: "My father always worked very hard on his pictures and they were painted very slowly. If you study them, you keep discovering new things about them — a new form is revealed, a new star seems to shine, a new shadow stretches out — in a word, his pictures are very much alive. A Tanner can do more than give you enjoyment, it can come to your rescue, it can reaffirm your confidence in man and his destiny, it can help you surmount your difficulties or console you in distress."³²

Having explored the Tanner roots in the United States, I set out in 1984 to discover the Tanner connection in Europe. My mother's memories had been silenced due to severe illness, so I turned to historical records and the reflections of other relatives. One of the first I sought was Jesse. From his correspondence with my

mother, I knew that he was eighty-one years old and lived in Le Douhet, a small village in southwest France. Of course the letters did not change the fact that Jesse and I were strangers. He knew nothing about me and little about the rest of his relatives in America, and perhaps he wanted to keep it that way.

I wrote to Jesse and suggested a meeting, which he discouraged by various strategies. But I was determined, even after he wired a telegram saying that it would not be possible for me to visit him. When we did meet, he still seemed to resent my presence, as if he were fearful of opening old wounds, or of having to probe once more into the reality of who he was and his own ambivalence about his family. Eventually though, over some delicious potato soup and a few fond memories, he warmed to me and slowly began to reveal portions of our common ancestry. Jesse opened his arms to me and, speaking for all of my French relatives, said, "We have grown to love you." Like the thread Ariadne gave Theseus to solve the labyrinth, Jesse, with a smile and soft words, provided me with both encouragement and with an aperture through which to survey my family's origins.

It was my good fortune to meet and talk with Jesse when I did; in May 1985 he died. In the end he had shared some of his private feelings and allowed me to forage among his father's diaries and documents. From this vast assortment of memorabilia I learned that Henry Tanner was not so absorbed in his work that he ignored the plight of other artists. He often opened his home and studio to black American artists, such as William Henry Johnson, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, Laura Wheeler Waring, Aaron Douglas, and Hale Woodruff, all of whom sought his advice and counsel when in Paris. While reading a passel of his letters, I discovered that my granduncle never considered himself an expatriate; in fact he eschewed the word. He believed he did not have the luxury of being an expatriate, a privilege, as James Baldwin would suggest years later, accorded only to white Americans.

Henry Tanner was a quiet, self-effacing, and talented man whose work influenced the development of black art in America. He made it possible for generations of black artists to compete in the world of art, giving them an example of how to create without capitulating to rampant racism. In myriad ways he was continuing a legacy passed on to him by his noble father. There is much to glean from the exemplary life of a man who would brook no compromise and insisted, as his son wrote of him, "that man has an active role to play and should not submit passively to his fate."³³ I am convinced that there was neither submission nor surrender in the art and life of Henry Ossawa Tanner.

RAE ALEXANDER-MINTER

CHRONOLOGY

KATHLEEN JAMES

SYLVIA YOUNT



Thomas Eakins, *Portrait of Henry O. Tanner*, 1900, oil on canvas,
24 $\frac{1}{8}$ $\times$ 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York.

President's List

TANNER PAINTING UNVEILING RECEPTION - Tuesday OCT 29 1996 - 6:00 PM State Floor - Business -
East Visitors Entrance For Official Government Use Only

Page 1

THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Hon. Jane Alexander**
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts
Washington, DC
Guest: Mr. Alexander D. Crary
- A **Reverend Wendell Anthony**
Fellowship Chapel
Detroit, MI
- Ms. Jeanne Ashe-Moutoussamy**
New York, NY
- A **Mrs. Norma Ketay Asnes**
New York, NY
- A **Mr. Edward J. Babb**
Barnes, McGhee, Seque & Harper
New York, NY
- A **Dr. Leon Banks**
Los Angeles, CA
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bell**
New Paltz, NY
- A **Dr. Tritobia Hay Benjamin**
Associate Dean of Fine Arts, Howard University
Washington, DC
- Dr. and Mrs. John Biggers**
Houston, TX
- A **Mr. Jonathan Binstock**
Artist/Curator, African American Exhibits, National Gallery of Art
Guest: Ms. Jacquelyn Serwer
- Mr. Al Boute**
President, Independence Bank of Chicago
Chicago, IL
- A **Dr. Alex Boyd**
President, Black Caucus of the American Library Association
Newark, NJ
- A **Mr. U. Lawrence Boze**
President, National Bar Association
Houston, TX
- A **Mr. Robert L. Breeden**
Chairman of the Board, White House Historical Association

For Official Government Use Only

Page 2

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Ms. Robin C. Brooks (Spouse of: Frank Brooks)**
Managing Director, Wllamette Managing
Chicago, IL
- A **Ms. Elizabeth Broun**
Director, National Museum of American Art
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Alma Brown**
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. J. Carter Brown**
Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Mary A. Brown**
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Michael A. Brown**
President, Ki Technology, Inc.
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Raymond Alexander Brown**
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Edith Buffalow and Mr. Sidney Buffalow**
Ramee Gallery
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Yolanda Caraway**
President, The Caraway Group
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Samuel A. Carradine**
Executive Director, National Association of Minority Contractors
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Cheri Carter**
The White House, Office of Public Liaison
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Marion "Oatsie" Charles**
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Gabriella Coleman**
President, The Prudential Foundation
Newark, NJ
- A **Mrs. Betty W. Currie**
Executive Secretary to, The White House
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 3

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Mr. and Mrs. George Curry**
Editor, Emerge Magazine
Washington, DC
- A **Rev. William A. Davidson**
Christ Church Riverdale
Riverdale, NY
- A **Ms. Leslie Tanner Moore Derby**
Philadelphia, PA
- A **Dr. and Mrs. David Driskell**
Hyattsville, MD
- A **Mr. Ofield Dukes**
President, Ofield Dukes and Associates
Washington, DC
- A **Dr. Ramona Edelin**
President & CEO, National Urban Coalition
Washington, DC
- Ms. Eva Evans**
Supreme Basileus, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
Lansing, MI
- A **Dr. and Mrs. Walter O. Evans**
Detroit, MI
- A **Ms. Myrlie Evers-Williams**
Chair, NAACP
Baltimore, MD
- A **Dr. and Mrs. Alan Fern**
Director, National Portrait Gallery
Washington, DC
- Ms. Tina Flourney**
DNC Trustee, Philip Morris Management Corporation
New York, NY
- A **Mrs. Nancy "Bitsy" M. Folger**
Chairman, Board of Directors, The White House Endowment Fund
- A **Dr. Kenneth A. Forde and Mr. Kareitha Forde**
Dobbs Ferry, NY
- A **Ms. Marcia Fudge**
President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Washington, DC
Guest: Ms. Gwendolyn E. Boyd

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 4

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Dr. and Mrs. William Funderburk**
Washington, DC
- Mr. Sam Gilliam**
Artist
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. William Granville**
National Chairman & CEO, Granville Academy
Trenton, NJ
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Green**
Managing Director, Lehman Brothers
Washington, DC
- Mr. Richard Griffey**
Chairman, Solar Records
Hollywood, CA
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Selvin Gumbs**
Tinton Falls, NJ
- A **Mr. Andre Harrell**
President & CEO, Motown Records
Los Angeles, CA
- A **Mr. and Mrs. George B. Hartzog**
McLean, VA
- A **Hon. Alexis M. Herman**
Assistant to the President & Director of Public Liaison, White House
- A **Mr. and Mrs. John Hewitt**
New York, NY
- A **Hon. and Mrs. Michael Heyman**
Secretary, Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC
- A **Dr. James K. Hill**
Retirees Association of Howard University
- A **Mr. Jesse Hill**
Chairman, Atlanta Life Insurance Company
Atlanta, GA
 Guest: Ms. Azira Hill
- A **Ms. Rita Holton**
 Guest: Mr. Donald Herndon

For Official Government Use Only

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Mr. Neil W. Horstman**
Administrator, White House Endowment Fund
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. Charlene Drew Jarvis**
Washington, DC City Council
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Addie Collins Johnson**
Sharon, MA
- A **Hon. James Johnson**
Asst. Sec. Enforcement, Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Johnson**
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson**
President & CEO, Black Entertainment Television
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Juanita Jordan (Spouse of: Michael Jordan)**
- Mr. Christaan Julius and Dr. Elizabeth Higashi Julius**
- A **Mrs. Harriet O. Kelley**
The Harmon & Harriet Kelley Collection of African American Art
San Antonio, TX
- A **Ms. June Kelly**
Director, The June Kelly Gallery
New York, NY
- A **Dr. Anne Marie Keyes**
New York, NY
- A **Ms. Holly Laffoon**
National Museum of African Art
Washington, DC
- Mr. Weldon Latham**
Senior Partner, Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge
Washington, DC
- Ms. Pat Lattimore**
- A **Mrs. Dorothy Leavell**
President, National Newspaper Publishers Assn.
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

Page 6

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Ms. Catherine LeBlanc**
Executive Director, White House Initiative on Historical Black Colleges, Department of Education
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Forrester A. Lee**
Claymont, DE
- A **Mr. David C. Levy**
Director, Corcoran Gallery of Art
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Jay Levy**
Black Radio Network
New York, NY
- A **Ms. Peggy Lewis**
Office of the First Lady, The White House
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Lewis**
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Virginia Brown Lewis (Spouse of: Ronald Lewis)**
- A **Mr. Aaron Lewis (Guest of: Ronald Lewis)**
- A **Miss Cameron Lewis (Guest of: Ronald Lewis)**
- A **Miss Nicole Lewis (Guest of: Ronald Lewis)**
- A **Mr. Stephen C. Lewis**
President, National Black MBA Association, Inc.
Chicago, IL
- A **Hon. Evelyn S. Lieberman**
Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff, The White House
- A **Hon. Gordon J. Linton**
Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, Department of Transportation
Washington, DC
- A **Dr. Catherine Lowe**
West Palm Beach, FL
- A **Mr. William Lucy**
President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Richard L. Mays**
Partner, Mays & Crutcher Law Offices
Little Rock, AR

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 7

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Mr. Colman McCarthy**
The Washington Post
Washington, DC
Guest: Mr. John McCarthy
- A **Ms. Ellen McCullough McCulloch-Lovell**
Executive Director, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. James I. McDaniel**
Associate Regional Director & White House Liaison, National Park Service National Capital Region
Washington, DC
- A **Mrs. Donna Kay McLarty**

Mr. Michel McQueen
White House Correspondent, Wall Street Journal
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Courtland Milloy**
Columnist, The Washington Post
Washington, DC
- A **Honorable Cheryl D. Mills**
Associate Counsel to the President, Office of White House Counsel
Washington D.C.
- A **Dr. Thomas K. Minter and Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter**
Riverdale, NY
- A **Mr. Thomas K. Minter**
London W84NT, England
- A **Dr. and Mrs. William Arthur Minter**
Guilford, CT
- A **Ms. Evangeline J. Montgomery**
Project Director, Arts in America USA
- A **Mr. Lewis Tanner Moore and Ms. Judy Heggstad**
Warrington, PA
- A **Ms. Minyon Moore**
Political Director, Democratic National Committee
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. Richard B. Moore**
Philadelphia, PA
- Ms. Maria Lopes (Substitute for: Thelma Moore)**
Executive Director, National Association of Black County Officials
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 8

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **Dr. Dewey F. Mosby**
Hamilton, NY
Guest: Ms. Rebekah Presson
- A **Ms. Frances Murphy**
Editor, Washington Afro-American
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. Bob J. Nash and Hon. Janice F. Kearney**
Assistant to the President & Director of Presidential Personnel, The White House
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Michele Norris**
ABC News
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. Deval L. Patrick**
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Department of Justice
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. (Rep.) Donald M. Payne**
Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus
Washington, DC
- Mr. Richard Pecantte**
Special Assistant to the Secretary, Department of Interior
Washington, DC
- A **Dr. Lois Jones Pierre-Noel**
Washington, DC
- A **Dr. Richard Powell and Mrs. C.T. Woods-Powell**
Professor of Art & History, Duke University
- A **Ms. Mary Puryear**
Manager, The Prudential Foundation
Newark, NJ
- A **Ms. Judith D. Pyle**
Madison, WI
- A **Hon. Franklin D. Raines**
Director, Office of Management & Budget
- Hon. Dwight P. Robinson**
Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. William D. Rollnick and Ms. Nancy Ellison**
Miami, FL

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 9

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

Mr. Ronald Saleh
Office of Administration

A **Mrs. Cynthia Schneider and Mr. Thomas J. Schneider**
Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Georgetown University
Washington, DC

A **Hon. and Mrs. Rex W. Scouten**
Curator, The White House
Washington, DC

A **Dr. Joseph J. Seneca**
Vice President of Academic Affairs, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ

A **Mr. Darrel Sewell**
The Robert L. McNeil Jr. Curator of American Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Ronald Sharps
Director, Benjamin Banneker Museum
Annapolis, MD

A **Ms. Donna Shuler**
Vice President, Independence Federal Bank

A **Mr. Hugh Sidey**
Contributing Editor, Time Magazine
Washington, DC

A **Hon. Leonard L. Silverstein**
Silverstein and Mullens
Washington, DC

A **Honorable Rodney E. Slater**
Federal Highway Adms, Department of Transportation
Washington, DC

A **Mr. Clarence O. Smith**
President, Essence Communications
New York, NY

A **Mr. and Mrs. Lou Stovall**
Washington, DC

A **Mrs. Joy Carter Sundlun**
Washington, DC
Guest: Ms. Cintra Carter Huber Sander

Mr. H. Patrick Swygert
President, Howard University
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 10

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Accepts and No Responses

- A **M. Jacques Tanner and Mme. Chantal Tanner**
- A **Ms. Florence Tate**
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Sandra E. Taylor**
Director, Public Affairs, Eastman Kodak Company
Washington, DC
- Ms. Susan P. Thomases**
Wilkie Farr & Gallagher
New York, NY
- A **Mr. Thurlow Evans Tibbs**
Washington, DC
- A **Ms. Isabella Tanner Treece**
Columbus, OH
- A **Hon. Ann F. Walker**
Special Assistant to the President and Director of Research, The White House
Washington, DC
- A **Mr. and Mrs. George H. Walker**
Silver Spring, MD
- A **Mr. and Mrs. Milton Washington**
Pittsburgh, PA
- Ms. Joyce Wellman**
Board Member, artist, Lawyers for the Arts
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. Togo D. West**
Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense
- A **Mr. Charlton Williams**
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC
- A **Hon. Margaret (Maggie) A. Williams**
Assistant to the President & Chief of Staff to the First Lady, The White House
- A **Ms. Deborah Willis**
Board Member, CAA
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 11

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Regrets

- R **Mr. Henry "Hank" Aaron**
The Atlanta Braves
Atlanta, GA
- R **Rev. Charles G. Adams**
Pastor, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church
Detroit, MI
- R **Dr. Maya Angelou**
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, NC
- R **Mrs. Rose Marie Banks (Spouse of: Leon Banks)**
- R **Ms. Paula A. Banks**
President & Executive Director, The Sears-Roebuck Foundation
Hoffman Estates, IL
- R **Mr. Rutgers Barclay**
Santa Fe, NM
- R **Mr. Don H. Barden**
President, Barden Communications, Incorporated
Detroit, MI
- R **Mr. Lerone Bennett**
Executive Editor, Ebony Magazine
Chicago, IL
- R **Mrs. Carol O. Biondi**
New York, New
- R **Hon. (Rep.) Sanford D. Bishop**
D/Georgia, House of Representatives
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. Julian Bond**
- R **Hon. John Brademas**
President Emeritus, New York University
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Ed Bradley**
60 Minutes
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Frank Brooks**
President, Brooks Sausage Company, Inc.
Kenosha, WI

For Official Government Use Only

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:00 PM

Regrets

- R **Ms. Tracy Brown (Guest of: Alma Brown)**
Washington, DC
- R **Hon. Jesse Brown**
Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs
- R **Mr. Robert Brown**
B & C Associates
High Point, NC
- R **Mr. John H. Bryan**
Chairman & CEO, Sara Lee Corporation
Chicago, IL
- R **Mr. Thomas J. Burrell**
Burrell Communications Group
Chicago, IL
- R **Mrs. Peggy Cooper Cafritz**
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. Phillip Dennis Cate**
Director, The Jane Vorhees Zimmerli Museum
New Brunswick, NJ
- R **Ms. Elizabeth Catlett**
Sculptor
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Charles Conconi**
Editor at Large, Washingtonian
Washington, DC
- R **Dr. Kinshasha Holman Conwill**
Director, Studio Museum of Harlem
New York, NY
- R **Dr. and Mrs. Bill Cosby**
The Brokaw Company
Los Angeles, CA
- R **Mrs. Dorothy M. Craig**
Midland, TX
- R **Ms. Anne d'Harnoncourt**
Director, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Ms. Suzanne DePasse**
President, DePasse Entertainment
Los Angeles, CA

For Official Government Use Only

Page 13

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

- R **Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel**
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Charles Duncan**
- R **Mr. Kenneth Edmonds**
C/o Hervey & Company
Los Angeles, CA
- R **Bishop J. Delano Ellis**
Presiding Bishop, The United Pentecostal Church of Christ
Cleveland, OH
- R **Ms. Toni Fay**
Vice President, Corporate Community Relations, Time-Warner, Inc.
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Arthur Fennell**
President, National Association of Black Journalists
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Mr. Everett L. Fly**
President, E.L. Fly & Associates
San Antonio, TX
- R **Ms. Ann Fudge**
President, Maxwell House Coffee Company
White Plains, NY
- R **Mr. Willie E. Gary**
Senior Partner, Gary, Williams & Parenti
Stuart, FL
- R **Ms. Charlene Hunter Gault**
NewsHour with Jim Lehrer
Arlington, VA
- R **Mr. Ronald T. Gault**
Managing Director, J.P. Morgan Securities
New York, NY
- R **Mrs. Gussella W. Gelzer**
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Mr. James Gibson**
Executive Director, D.C. Agenda Project
Washington, DC
- R **Mrs. Dorothea Green**
Fisher Island, FL

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 14

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

- R **Mr. Harry J. Greenstein**
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Mr. Bryant Gumbel**
The Today Show
New York, NY
- R **Mrs. Ann L. Gund**
Cambridge, MA
- R **Mr. Robert Harris**
Grand Polemarch, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Mr. Roger Horchow**
Dallas, TX
- R **Hon. Harold Ickes**
Assistant to the President & Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Political Affairs, The White House
Washington, DC
- R **Ms. Gwendolyn Ifill**
NBC News
Washington, DC
- R **Honorable Maynard Jackson**
Chairman, Jackson Securities, Inc.
Atlanta, GA
- R **Hon. (Rep.) Sheila Jackson-Lee**
D/Texas, House of Representatives
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. Richard H. Jenrette**
Senior Advisor, Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, Inc.
New York, NY
- R **Mrs. Janice M. Johnson**
Laguna Beach, CA
- R **Mr. and Mrs. John H. Johnson**
Chairman, Johnson Publishing Company, Inc.
Chicago, IL
- R **Mr. Robert B. Johnson**
Office of Public Liaison
- R **Mr. Robert L. Johnson**
Chairman & CEO, Johnson Bryce, Inc.
Memphis, TN

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 15

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

R **Mr. Quincy Jones**
Quincy Jones Productions
Los Angeles, CA

R **Mr. Michael Jordan**
Jump, Inc.
Chicago, IL

R **Mr. Tom Joyner**
Tom Joyner Morning Show
Dallas, TX

R **Dr. Harmon Kelley**
The Harmon and Harriet Kelly Collection of African American Art
San Antonio, TX

R **Dr. and Mrs. Francis L. Lawrence**
President, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
New Brunswick, NJ

R **Dr. LaSalle D. Leffall**
New York, NY

R **Mr. Delano E. Lewis**
President & CEO, National Public Radio
Washington, DC

R **Mr. Ronald Lewis**
Mitchellville, MD

R **Dr. Samella Lewis**
Los Angeles, CA

R **Hon. Floydetta McAfee**
Special Assistant to the President, Public Liaison

R **Hon. (Rep.) Cynthia McKinney**
D/Georgia, House of Representatives
Washington, DC

R **Hon. Kweisi Mfume**
President and CEO, NAACP
Baltimore, MD

R **Ms. Thelma Moore**
Former President, National Association of Black County Officials
Washington, DC

R **Mr. Raymond D. Nasher**
The Nasher Company
Dallas, TX

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 16

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

- R **Mr. George A. Needham**
Needham and Associates
New York, NY
- R **Hon. Hazel R. O'Leary**
Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy
Washington, DC
- R **Hon. Leon E. Panetta**
Chief of Staff to the President, The White House
Washington, DC
- R **Hon. (Sen.) Claiborne Pell**
D/Rhode Island, United States Senate
Washington, DC
- R **Hon. Earl A. Powell**
Director, The National Gallery of Art
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. Hugh B. Price**
President, National Urban League
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. William Raspberry**
Columnist, Washington Post Writers Group
Washington, DC
- R **Mrs. Linda Johnson Rice and Mr. Andre Rice**
President & CEO, Johnson Publishing Company, Inc.
Chicago, IL
- R **Mr. Carl Rowan**
Chicago Sun-Times
Washington, DC
- R **Hon. Robert E. Rubin**
Secretary of the Treasury, Department of the Treasury
Washington DC
- R **Mrs. Jill S. Ruckelshaus**
Medina, WA
- R **Ms. Ingrid Saunders-Jones**
Vice President, The Coca-Cola Company
Atlanta, GA
- R **Mr. Bernard Shaw**
Cable News Network
Washington, DC

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 17

REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

- R **Ms. Ann Elizabeth Sheffer**
President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
- R **Mr. Walter H. Shorenstein**
Shorenstein Companies
San Francisco, CA
Guest: Ms. Gale Brophy
- R **Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims**
Curator, 20th Century Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, NY
- R **Mr. Sidney Small**
Chairman, American Urban Network
New York, NY
- R **Mr. H. T. Smith**
Former President, National Bar Association
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. Wayman F. Smith**
Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Anheuser Busch Companies, Inc.
St. Louis, MO
- R **Mr. Alfred R. Stern**
New York, NY
- R **Dr. Rowena Stewart**
Director, African-American Historical & Cultural Museum
Philadelphia, PA
- R **Mr. H. Lebaron Taylor**
Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Sony Music Entertainment
New York, NY
- R **Ms. Susan L. Taylor**
Editor-in-Chief, Essence Magazine
New York, NY
- R **Hon. (Rep.) Bennie G. Thompson**
D/Mississippi, House of Representatives
Washington, DC
- R **Mr. DeWayne Wickham**
Columnist, USA Today
Arlington, VA
- R **Ms. Marty Wikstrom**
Vice President & General Manager, Nordstrom
McLean, VA

For Official Government Use Only

For Official Government Use Only

Page 18

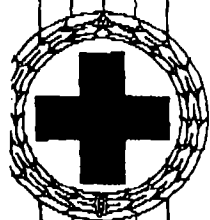
REPORT DATE: October 28, 1996
REPORT TIME: 5:01 PM

Regrets

R **Mr. Carl Williams**
Vice President, Information Technology, Amoco Corporation
Chicago, IL

R **Ms. Oprah Winfrey**
c/o Deborah Hermelee, Harpo Entertainment
Chicago, IL

For Official Government Use Only



American Red Cross
History & Education Center
National Headquarters

October 18, 1996

Ms. Peggy Lewis
Assistant to the Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Old Executive Office Building
Room 100
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Thank you for agreeing to send me a copy of the White House Press Release regarding the acceptance of a Henry Ossawa Tanner painting. Attached is a bit of information about the paintings in the American Red Cross collection. The name of the third painting, which currently hangs in the lobby of the National Headquarters Building, is *Canteen at the Front*. It was painted in 1918.

As you probably know, Tanner joined the American Red Cross in December 1917, with the rank of lieutenant in the Department of Public Information. He soon was attached to the Farm Service Bureau, with whom he worked on a plan he had developed for growing produce and raising livestock on unused land around hospitals, using convalescing soldiers as a work force to boost morale. He did not apply to make sketches for paintings until the last months of the war in September 1918, after his agricultural plan had become an unqualified success and he had been promoted to assistant director of the Farm and Garden Services for the American Red Cross.

The History and Education Center is thrilled to know that another Tanner will be just across the street!

Sincerely,

Anna J. Norville

430 17th Street, N.W. • Washington, DC 20006 • Tel. (202) 639-3300 • Fax. (202) 628-1362

Elizabeth A.C. Perry, Executive Director



**In Celebration of Black History Month
The American Red Cross
History and Education Center Presents
a Tribute to
Henry Ossawa Tanner
1859 - 1937**

Henry Tanner was fifty-five years old when World War I began in 1914. As with the numerous celebrities and U.S. citizens who signed the quilt on display in this room, Henry Tanner promoted the work of the American Red Cross in World War I. From December 1917 to June 1919, he worked for the American Red Cross Publicity Office in France, during which time he completed three paintings showing canteen scenes. Canteens were a focal point of American Red Cross overseas operations, as they provided food and comfort for weary soldiers. These canteen paintings are now proudly displayed at the American Red Cross National Headquarters. Reproductions of two of these paintings, *Intersection of Roads, Neufchateau* and *ARC Canteen Exterior, Toul*, are currently on display in this gallery. Both paintings were done in 1918. This year the White House acquired a painting by Henry O. Tanner, the first African American artist so honored.

Henry Tanner was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 21, 1859, two years before the start of the Civil War. He was the oldest son in a large African American family, and his heritage also included Native American and English ancestry. His middle name, Ossawa, comes from Ossawatimie, a town in Kansas where John Brown began his fight against slavery in 1856. Henry's father, Benjamin Tucker Tanner, was born a free man and grew up in Pittsburgh. Benjamin Tanner became a minister and an important bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Henry's mother, Sarah Miller Tanner, was freed from slavery in Virginia when she was a young girl.



American Red Cross
History & Education Center
National Headquarters

October 18, 1996

Ms. Peggy Lewis
Assistant to the Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Old Executive Office Building
Room 100
Washington, DC 20500

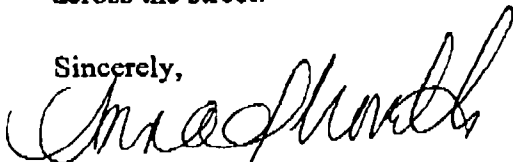
Dear Ms. Lewis:

Thank you for agreeing to send me a copy of the White House Press Release regarding the acceptance of a Henry Ossawa Tanner painting. Attached is a bit of information about the paintings in the American Red Cross collection. The name of the third painting, which currently hangs in the lobby of the National Headquarters Building, is *Canteen at the Front*. It was painted in 1918.

As you probably know, Tanner joined the American Red Cross in December 1917, with the rank of lieutenant in the Department of Public Information. He soon was attached to the Farm Service Bureau, with whom he worked on a plan he had developed for growing produce and raising livestock on unused land around hospitals, using convalescing soldiers as a work force to boost morale. He did not apply to make sketches for paintings until the last months of the war in September 1918, after his agricultural plan had become an unqualified success and he had been promoted to assistant director of the Farm and Garden Services for the American Red Cross.

The History and Education Center is thrilled to know that another Tanner will be just across the street!

Sincerely,



Anna J. Norville

450 17th Street, N.W. • Washington, DC 20006 • Tel: (202) 639-3300 • Fax: (202) 628-1362

Elizabeth A.C. Perry, Executive Director



**In Celebration of Black History Month
The American Red Cross
History and Education Center Presents
a Tribute to
Henry Ossawa Tanner
1859 - 1937**

Henry Tanner was fifty-five years old when World War I began in 1914. As with the numerous celebrities and U.S. citizens who signed the quilt on display in this room, Henry Tanner promoted the work of the American Red Cross in World War I. From December 1917 to June 1919, he worked for the American Red Cross Publicity Office in France, during which time he completed three paintings showing canteen scenes. Canteens were a focal point of American Red Cross overseas operations, as they provided food and comfort for weary soldiers. These canteen paintings are now proudly displayed at the American Red Cross National Headquarters. Reproductions of two of these paintings, *Intersection of Roads*, *Neufchateau* and *ARC Canteen Exterior, Toul*, are currently on display in this gallery. Both paintings were done in 1918. This year the White House acquired a painting by Henry O. Tanner, the first African American artist so honored.

Henry Tanner was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 21, 1859, two years before the start of the Civil War. He was the oldest son in a large African American family, and his heritage also included Native American and English ancestry. His middle name, Ossawa, comes from Ossawatimie, a town in Kansas where John Brown began his fight against slavery in 1856. Henry's father, Benjamin Tucker Tanner, was born a free man and grew up in Pittsburgh. Benjamin Tanner became a minister and an important bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Henry's mother, Sarah Miller Tanner, was freed from slavery in Virginia when she was a young girl.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 26, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: MARGARET A. WILLIAMS, CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE FIRST LADY

FROM: REX W. SCOUTEN, CURATOR

SUBJECT: Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City

Subject painting by Henry Tanner has been approved for purchase by both the White House Endowment Fund and the White House Historical Association, following the recommendation of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

The Tanner painting is currently in a show in Dallas, Texas. The painting is then scheduled for a show in Chicago that will not close until May 1996.

I have spoken with the touring Exhibitions Curator, Margaret Conrads, of the Nelson Atkins Museum in Kansas City. Ms. Conrads feels very strongly that Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City should not be removed from the show. She considers the painting to be the centerpiece of Tanner's early work and absolutely essential in telling the story of Henry Ossawa Tanner's career.

Under the circumstances, I would advise that the White House Endowment Fund proceed with the purchase of the painting and that we honor the commitment to the touring exhibition.

The White House Historical Association could issue a press release now with the details of the painting - the artist, the cost, etc. and the fact that it is part of a traveling exhibition and will not be at the White House until Spring.

The story can be repeated when the painting arrives at the White House in May 1996.

Please advise.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

REX W. SCOUTEN
WHITE HOUSE CURATOR

Rex Scouten first joined the White House staff in 1949 as a Special Agent of the United States Secret Service during President Harry Truman's tenure. He has served ten presidents and held a variety of consecutive positions including Secret Service Agent, Deputy to the Chief Usher and Assistant Regional Director for White House Liaison with the National Park Service.

In 1969, he became Chief Usher, a position he held until 1986 when he briefly retired after 37 years of public service. At that time he was presented with the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service by President Reagan in an Oval Office ceremony. He returned to the White House at the request of President Reagan in 1986 as Curator. In this present position, Mr. Scouten is responsible for the White House collection of fine and decorative arts and the continuing research on the history and furnishings of the Executive Residence.

Scouten was born on a farm near Snover, a rural community in Michigan's thumb with a population of 250. He served in the military during World War II, spending his 19th birthday in North Africa, 20th in Italy and 21st in Germany. Following his discharge he returned to college and was graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in Business and Public Service and was recruited by the United States Secret Service.

While assigned to President Truman's detail, Scouten was entering the White House's West Wing when the alarm came about the assassination attempt against President Truman by two Puerto Rican nationalists. Within minutes he was across the street at Blair House. During his assignment with then Vice-President Nixon, he traveled to forty countries. As Deputy to the Chief Usher, he was on duty when President Eisenhower suffered his slight stroke. During the Kennedy administration he assisted Jacqueline Kennedy with the now legendary dinner for Pakistani President Ayub Kahn held at Mount Vernon. Scouten was supervising the redecoration of the Oval Office when word came that President Kennedy had been shot. He put the office back in order later that evening and helped make arrangements for the state funeral and for the visiting world leaders. He did not leave the White House for five days during this period. As Assistant Regional Director for White House Liaison, he made significant contributions to Lady Bird Johnson's beautification program and strengthened the National Park Service's role in historic preservation and interpretation at the White House.

During his tenure as Chief Usher, the most elaborate dinner of modern times was given by the Nixon's to celebrate the return of Vietnam POW's. Nearly fourteen hundred people attended the party on the South Lawn and Scouten's crew laid out forty thousand items for table settings alone. In the Ford administration, Scouten played a role in the numerous state visits honoring our nation's two hundredth birthday. When President Carter restricted his public appearances because of the American hostage crisis in Iran, he helped bring the country to President Carter. There were 377 public events in the White House that year, the most in history. Scouten was in the White House Solarium with Mrs. Reagan when a Secret Service agent hurried in and he heard the dreaded words for the second time - "The President has been shot".

Throughout his career he has traveled to over forty five countries, planned and supervised major ceremonies of state, in happy times and sad, and carefully watched over the development of the formal gardens and grounds of the White House as well as the preservation of the residence and work place of the President of the United States. In his present post as Curator, Scouten provides continuity, experience and affection to the everyday life of the White House.

Scouten's awards include: The President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, The George McAneny Award, American Historical Preservation Society. He is an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, Regent Emeritus of the American Architectural Foundation, a twenty five year member of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, a board member of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, the Association of Former Agents of the United States Secret Service, Historic Fairfax City, Inc., and the Very Special Arts Gallery Advisory Board.

In his lectures, Rex Scouten enjoys presenting the rich architecture, design and history of the White House and its collection of fine and decorative art to audiences around the world. When queried about plans of retirement he comments, "The White House is the most exciting place in the world. When I no longer get a thrill when I walk through those gates in the morning, I will know it is time to leave."