

238 Putnam Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
September 28, 1994

Andrew Schoelkopf
American Paintings
Christie's Park Avenue
502 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Schoelkopf:

RE: Eastman Johnson, The Boston Rocker, not dated, oil on board, 19 1/2 x 14 3/4 inches. Signed lower left "E. Johnson."
I examined this painting at Christie's on September 17, 1994.

In my opinion this painting is by Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), and I will include it in my catalogue raisonné.

I have very little information about this particular painting, except that it came up at auction at Christie's in December 1980. I have not seen it listed in the usual listings of exhibitions of nineteenth-century paintings.

The subject is typical of Johnson. Unlike many other nineteenth-century genre painters who represented older girls as mere pretty objects, Johnson painted girls involved in such serious occupations as reading. The Art Lover shows a very young girl reading a big book; Interesting News shows an older teenager, lying on a couch, reading a newspaper by the light of a window. In each, the girl concentrates all of her attention on reading.

The style of The Boston Rocker is typical of Johnson. The edges of the floorboards help to create the perspective into depth, and the modeling creates a convincing figure seated in her rocker. Luminous brown siennas fill the area at the right and the light from the left highlights her skirt, her face and arms and the book and her knitting on the stool at the left. Also typical is the slight outlinings in graphite which articulate the eyebrows and the edge of her face. It is an exquisite work.

If more information comes my way I will pass it along. Therefore, I would be pleased to hear from the new owner.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Hills
Art Historian, author
Eastman Johnson, 1972