

238 Putnam Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
February 18, 1991

Mr. Harold Lieberman



Dear Mr. Lieberman:

Thank you for your letter of January 31, 1991, regarding the Eastman Johnson painting The Savoyard which has been in your wife's family since the 1907 estate sale of Johnson's work. I also appreciate the family tree which you sketched in for me. It looks like Mary Naomi Johnson and Eastman Johnson were more than double cousins, since their maternal grandparents were sisters who married brothers, and their respective parents were sisters who married brothers.

Thanks for sharing your information on the Savoyard subjects. You see three versions: your version; Brooklyn Museum; and the ex-Butler collection version. I have records of at least four which follows the pose of your version. (It is helpful in tracing these pictures to keep a record of the size and inscriptions on each. I take it that your version is not signed? Baur does not mention any inscriptions.)

1. Cogswell version: The Savoyard, o/c, 36 x 29 inches. Purchased by W. B. Cogswell at the 1907 estate sale (#75) and descended through the family. No inscriptions [Please correct].

2. Brooklyn Museum version: Savoyard Boy, oil on canvas, 37-3/8 x 32-1/4 inches. Signed LL "E. Johnson, Hague 1853" From Henry P. Martin to the Brooklyn Museum in 1907. [The accession number of 07.273 indicates that it came into the collection in 1907. One might speculate that Martin bought the work from the widow to give to the Museum; the 1907 accession date argues for that speculation. At a later date I could try to find out who Mr. Martin was.]

3. Butler version: Chimney-Sweep. [Catalogue states no medium], 32 x 25 inches. Signed right: "E. Johnson, 1853" No. 59 of the Sale catalogue of American Art Galleries, 1910, of the collection of Theron R. Butler. [I have an identification photograph taken from the Sale catalogue, which noted "Knoedler's" in pen, meaning that they had bought it. I used the catalogue in the Frick Art Museum Library.]

4. "Newhouse version": [So called because I got the information from the back of a photograph at Newhouse Galleries and I rephotographed their photograph for my own files.] Oil, no measurements given, signed LL: "E. Johnson/ Hague 1853." The photograph shows a painting exactly like yours and the Butler version except for variations on the vines of the plant to the right. (The way to distinguish these versions is in variations of the vines and leaves and plastered wall behind.)

5. There is yet another reference to The Savoyard. A painting with this title was #36 in Mr. Belmont's Collection, exhibited and sold by Leavitt Art Rooms in 1872. (August Belmont was one of Johnson's patrons.) Since I have no photograph and no information about medium, dimensions or inscriptions I do not know if this is the Butler version or the Newhouse version or another picture altogether.

What we do not know is whether the following versions match up with the above or are separate pictures:

NAD version - shown in the National Academy of Design in 1856

Washington Art Association 1857 version called "The Young Savoyard" belonging to Mr. Riggs; probably also the same as Tuckerman's 1867 reference to "Savoyard Boy" owned by Riggs.

Tuckerman's 1867 reference to "Chimney-sweep" owned by J. Harrison of Philadelphia.

Metropolitan Fair 1864 sale of "The Young Sweep." (I have a student working on the Metropolitan Fair and she has found photographs of the exhibition; I will see if she can discover what this picture looked like.)

There are two other pictures with similar titled but different subjects:

Savoyard Fiddler, oil on canvas, 13-1/2 x 10 inches. Signed L.R. "E. J." According to the owner in 1970 (Robert Schoelkopf Gallery) the painting went from Mrs. Johnson to W. B. Cogswell to the Misses Browning. Do you know this painting? Enclosed is a photocopy of the photograph.

The Savoyard (Baur #12), oil on academy board, 12 x 14 inches. Back is inscribed "Dusseldorf." I have seen this picture of a girl leaning on an attick window, which belonged to Mrs. Elbrick a descendant of Johnson's brother Rear Admiral Alfred W. Johnson.

The Chandler geneology is found in George Chandler, The Chandler Family: The Descendants of William and Annes Chandler Who Settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts 1637. Printed for the Family, Worcester, Mass., 1883. I used the New York Public Library copy.

I hope that you will consider selling the painting to the Minneapolis Institute of Art before putting it up for auction or selling to a dealer.

Regarding copies: I would suggest that you have large Poloroids made of the painting. They have huge cameras, and the quality is excellent in terms of the image. No painter living today could make a copy that would do the picture justice and it would be quite expensive. Museums here in Boston have made such copies for sale and even to hang in their galleries when they need such a copy (for comparative or historical purposes); the Gardner Museum considered hanging such copies of the paintings stolen from their collection. You should telephone the Poloroid Corporation here in Cambridge to find out how you would go about doing this.

I would appreciate receiving photographs of the three Cogswell family portraits (Mabel Cogswell; Mary Naomi Johnson Cogswell and William Cogswell). That will be helpful to me in settling a number of other questions. Also, do you have any family papers that refer to Eastman Johnson or records as to where the other paintings went that Cogswell bought in the 1907 sale?

By the way, is [REDACTED] any relation? Years ago he brought me a drawing to look at.

Good luck in your researches. Let me know what happens to your painting.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Hills

P.S. Anyone (such as a dealer or auction house) publishing my research should give me credit.