

Hey Kids, Meet Grandma Moses

American Artist (1860-1961)

Anna Mary Robertson was born on September 7, 1860 in Washington County, New York. There she spent the first twelve years of her life on the family farm with her father, mother, and nine brothers and sisters.

Because her father enjoyed seeing his children draw, he bought them large sheets of blank newspaper. Anna Mary loved drawing happy, colorful scenes.

Anna Mary, a pretty young woman, attracted the attention of farmer, Thomas S. Moses. They were married in 1887 and bought a farm in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. They had ten children but five died at birth. In 1907 they moved again to Eagle Bridge, New York where Grandma Moses lived for the rest of her life.



While wallpapering the parlor of their Eagle Bridge home, Anna Mary ran out of paper. To complete the room she hung white wallpaper and painted a scene with regular house paint. This was her first painting. The wallpaper scene is known as the Fireboard and hangs in a museum in Bennington, Vermont.

When Grandma Moses decided farm work was too difficult, she took up embroidery. At the age of 76, she gave up embroidery because of arthritis and started to paint instead.

Most of Grandma Moses' works were painted on cardboard. The scenes she painted were happy scenes of herself as a child or rural home life. Other paintings are of people in eighteenth-century costumes, the way they might have dressed in the country. Her most popular paintings include *The Old Oaken Bucket*, *Sugaring Off*, *Over the River to Grandma's House*, and *Catching the Turkey*.

Grandma Moses died on December 13, 1961. Regardless of the fact that her paintings are considered primitive because of the flat images, lack of shadows, and no indications of weather, they are filled with the joy of life. There is no despair or unhappiness. Her work shows this unrealistic view of life with remarkable power.

