



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

JERVIS MCENTEE (American, 1828-1891)

Vermont Sugaring

Oil on canvas

20 x 30 inches (50.8 x 76.2 cm)

Signed lower right: *McE_N.A.*

PROVENANCE: Barridoff Galleries, Portland, Maine, American and European Art, August 6, 1997, lot 179.

Jervis McEntee was born in the Hudson River Valley, in Rondout, New York, in 1828. At the age of twenty-two, McEntee studied for a year with Hudson River School master, Frederic E. Church, in New York City. He then worked briefly in the flour and feed business, before deciding, in 1855, to devote himself entirely to painting. He took up a studio at the legendary Tenth Street Studio Building, where artists such as Winslow Homer, Albert Bierstadt, and Church himself worked and exhibited. In 1858, McEntee had an additional studio built next to his father's home in Rondout, where the artist spent many summers painting the nearby Catskill Mountains. He was elected an associate member of the National Academy in 1860, and became a full member the following year. During the Civil War, he fought with the Union Army.

McEntee's belief in the capacity of the natural landscape to arouse profound emotions often inspired him to exhibit his paintings with passages of poetry, reflecting the influence of the poet Henry Pickering (1781-1838) who boarded with the McEntee family during the artist's childhood and introduced the young boy to fine art, poetry, and literature. During his lifetime, McEntee's work was shown at such venues as the National Academy of Design, the Brooklyn Art Association, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Boston Art Club, the Boston Athenaeum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Royal Academy in London, and the Paris Exposition of 1867. McEntee's belief in the capacity of the natural landscape to arouse profound emotions often inspired him to exhibit his paintings with passages of poetry. His austere autumnal landscapes, with subdued tones and a pensive, at times melancholy, mood, set him apart from those Hudson River artists who preferred sublime topography and vivid colors.

Today, McEntee's works are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and the Cleveland Museum of Art, among others.



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McEntee's autumn and winter landscapes with subdued tones set him apart from those Hudson River School artists who preferred sublime topography and vivid colors. He often preferred to present more intimate compositions as opposed to grand panoramas. The tonal nature of *Vermont Sugaring* typifies the pensive atmosphere and sense of loneliness found in many of McEntee's paintings. Although McEntee was not considered an American Barbizon artist, the austere environment of his simple rural scenes and his feathery brushwork connect much of his oeuvre to the rural, almost somber, landscapes of the French Barbizon, which became popular among American artists by the late nineteenth century.

McEntee spent most of his time in Rondout, New York, and New York City, traveling to Europe in 1868-9. In 1874, McEntee visited Vermont for the first time where he created landscape sketches from which he produced numerous paintings. A few days prior to his trip to Vermont, he recorded in his diary, “At Kaatskill we accidentally met [Frederick] Church who persuaded us to abandon the mountains and go to Clarendon Springs Vermont and as I really wanted to go to a new place we consented, had our baggage taken off the coach and went over to his house to pass the night... The next day we went to Clarendon Springs.”¹

1 October 28, 1874, *Jervis McEntee Diaries*, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution